THE KALEIDOSCOPIC TRANSVAAL

CARL JEPPE

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THE KALEIDOSCOPIC TRANSVAAL

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BY

CARL JEPPE

"NOTHING EXTENUATE
NOR AUGHT SET DOWN IN MALICE."

SECOND EDITION

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TO MY WIFE,

THE SHARER

OF MANY OF THE EXPERIENCES

RELATED IN THESE PAGES,

THIS VOLUME IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED.

219022

PREFACE

This book is not an attempt to write history. It makes no pretension to minute photographic exactness, but should be looked upon rather as an impressionist sketch, giving the broad sweep of hill and valley, light and shade, as the observer sees them, without details of foliage or flower.

Still less is it an autobiography, though it consists largely of reminiscences, interspersed with camp-fire stories and old half-forgotten tales ; and though it will be necessary to give a brief sketch of my life in the Transvaal, as a justification for this attempt to write on a subject bristling with problems, the complexity of which would tax a far abler pen than mine.

When in 1870 my family came to the South African Republic, at that time already better known as the Transvaal, I was a boy just in my teens. In 1876, less than eighteen years old, I had left school, acted as a reporter, and entered a lawyer's office. I was then "commandeered" for the Sekukuni Campaign, and went through it

from first to last. In 1877 I was appointed Clerk of the Peace in Waterberg, then a district inhabited only by natives and a few hundred families of Boers.[1] There, and subsequently in Standerton, where I held a similar post in 1879-1880, I often acted as Landdrost[2]—probably one of the youngest magistrates ever in office.

In 1880, when the first Boer war broke out, I had resigned my appointment and was articled to Mr. L. P. Ford, late Attorney-General of the Transvaal. In this war, or rather in the siege of Pretoria, I took part, as did all Pretorians, on the side of the British Government. A few years later I was admitted as advocate, and had become partner in the firm of Ford and Jeppe, a branch of which was established in Barberton; and when, in 1886, the Witwatersrand goldfield was discovered, I was one of its earliest pioneers.

Two of the largest suburbs of Johannesburg—Jeppestown and Fordsburg—were founded by Mr. Ford and myself, in conjunction with my father, the late Mr. Julius Jeppe, and my brother.

[1] Boer is the Dutch for farmer, and was originally only applied to that class, though in later days all Republican inhabitants of the Transvaal were proud to be known by it.

[2] Official with administrative and judicial functions, chief of a district.

In the earliest days of Johannesburg I took charge of a branch of our firm there, and became in time a member of all the public bodies of that town, including the Chamber of Mines, of which, for a brief time, I was the chairman.

In 1887 I was elected a member of the first Volksraad for Johannesburg, and represented that constituency for over four years, until after the Jameson raid. I was one of the members of the "Peace Committee," appointed by the President to take charge of the town during those troubled days.

A year later I was appointed Consul-General of the Republic at Cape Town. At the commencement of the war in 1900 I was arrested by the British authorities when on my way to Pretoria, and released on parole.

It will be seen, therefore, that I have had opportunities of knowing the Transvaal such as have been vouchsafed to few. I have explored all its nooks and corners. I have lived with and amongst both the white races with which it is peopled to-day, and have come in close contact with all its leading men. I have shared the work, the sport, the comradeship, of Boer and Briton, and have life-long friends among both of them.

The history of the Transvaal during the period

covered by this narrative is one of violent kaleidoscopic changes, of desperate struggles between two kindred races, of swaying conflict between two systems of Government, of rapid development from penury to untold wealth. Its parallel will not easily be found on this globe. The Transvaal, a Dutch republic, founded by British subjects, was first annexed by Great Britain, then had its independence restored, only to be annexed once more after a war of nearly three years' duration, and all but civil in its nature, for in it brother often fought against brother, and in more than one instance father and son were ranged on opposite sides.

Much that has happened in South Africa is due to misconception and prejudice, often born of wilful misrepresentation. These still endanger its future. It is the plain duty of all, therefore, to embrace every opportunity of removing misunderstandings, of counteracting calumny, and of placing motives and lines of conduct in their true light.

If this book in any way furthers these objects, I shall feel rewarded beyond my merits.

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THE

KALEIDOSCOPIC TRANSVAAL

CHAPTER I.

THE TRANSVAAL IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES.

In the year 1870, the period of the first great rush to the Kimberley Diamond Fields, the South African Republic was just emerging from a most primitive state of development. True, it had already "made History." Founded by the old Voortrekkers,[1] who left the Cape Colony in the thirties, and recognized by the British Government by the Sand River Convention, it had enlivened its youthful days by gambols which might well be likened to the playful antics of the immature in all animal creation. Republics, such as those of Lydenburg, Zoutpansberg, and Rustenburg, had been formed, and had disappeared; attempts to unite with its twin sister, the Orange Free State, had frequently been made, and had invariably ended in fraternal strife. Within its own boundaries, too, it had indulged in several civil warlets, accompanied fortunately by

[1] Pioneers.

but little bloodshed, but provocative of much noise and vapour; reconciliations which ended in free fights; confiscations which were annulled to be followed by attainder; and trials for high treason which resulted in a verdict of guilty, and a fine of 500 rix-dollars (£37 10*s.*). Fortunately none of these matters were taken very seriously. When we arrived in Pretoria, peace had been established for some years, but the occurrences of the "war" were still common topics. How Potchefstrom had been besieged, and "Old Griet," an old ship's cannon—the possession of which conferred overwhelming superiority, and so almost invariably implied victory—had inflicted untold damage by knocking down a stable and killing a mule; how Piet M. (now a Rand millionaire), when imprisoned in the stocks, had cheered his fellow-victims, and expressed the contempt he felt for his captors by playing the violin while in that uncomfortable position; how Jules Frank, a clever amateur conjurer and popularly believed to have dealings with the devil, had defeated a small Boer commando sent to arrest him, by producing a bottle, the removal of the cork of which he informed them would send them all to perdition—a threat which had immediate

and effective results;—all these occurrences were subjects of constant conversation.

In this struggle of factions and parties the late President Kruger, then Commandant-General, had already taken a conspicuous part. Indeed, it was due to him that the internecine warfare (truly "a sort of a kind of a war") had ceased, and peace had apparently been firmly established.

Marthinus Wessel Pretorius (son of the great A. W. J. Pretorius, General of the "Great Trek") ruled as President, and would probably have completed his allotted term of office, but for the discovery of the diamonds on the banks of the Vaal, and the immense rush of diggers they attracted. Until then the territory in which these precious stones were found was believed to be the property of the two Republics: when their value became apparent, however, a claim was laid to them by several native tribes, who were protected by the English Government. While the matter was still in dispute an independent Republic was formed by the diamond-diggers, under the Presidency of Mr. Stafford Parker; but it was speedily absorbed by England, and the question as to the ownership of the fields was left to the arbitration of Mr. Keate, Lieutenant-Governor of Natal.

Mr. Pretorius had received no authority to

consent to this arbitration, and when the award was given entirely against the Republics,[1] a storm of indignation was directed against him. The Volksraad was in session, and issued its protest—of academic value only, obviously; it also passed a vote of censure on the President, and expected him to resign. He made no movement towards vacating office, however, and the situation became decidedly strained. The members of the Volksraad either felt that they had no constitutional right to force the President to abdicate, or they shrank from applying it to one who bore so honoured a name, and who had been head also of the Orange Free State. Still, it was impossible that he should remain in office. At last the Gordian knot was cut in characteristic fashion. Amongst the members of the Raad there was one gifted with much courage, though with little eloquence; in fact he was commonly known as the "Hakelaar" (stutterer). On this occasion, however, he made the speech of his life. Prompted by Mr. Lys (the member for Pretoria, an old naval officer) and fortified by a good dinner, he addressed the Chair on a point of order. "Mr. Speaker," he said, "it

[1] The Orange Free State subsequently got £90,000 compensation—probably not one per cent. of the value of what it had lost.

appears that we have lost all authority; indeed it seems to me that the Volksraad has less power than any auctioneer in the land. Only yesterday I attended a sale. The auctioneer said "Going," and again he said "Going," and then "Gone," and the thing *was* gone. But here, in our Raad, we have said to Mr. Pretorius "Going," and "Going," and we have said to him "Gone," and I am hanged if he is not sitting in his chair [1] still!" This appeal proved irresistible. The President took his resignation (with which he had evidently provided himself to meet emergencies) out of his pocket and handed it in to the Chairman.

This resignation paved the way for President Burgers, whose *régime* inaugurated a new period. But of that later.

[1] Next to the Speaker.

CHAPTER II.

OLD PRETORIA.

"ARCADIA" is the name of Pretoria's favourite suburb; the appellation might fitly have been applied to the whole village, as it was thirty-six years ago. The title it loved best, however, was that of the "City of Roses." The whole town was drowned, smothered in those fragrant flowers; for each hedge consisted of them, each verandah, each wall was clothed in them. Pretoria's two or three hundred one-storied houses (mostly built of unburnt brick, and subject to frequent collapses during the rainy season) stood in their own large grounds, which bore an abundance of all fruits of the temperate and semi-tropical zones, and yielded rich crops of all kinds of vegetables. No market-gardener could hope to make an honest living in those days, when every inhabitant of Arcady sat in the shade of his own fig-tree. A magnificent water-supply sent its rippling courses down the length of each street, if street it could be called, for it consisted of a strip of rank green grass, some

eighty feet in width, through which the narrow roadway meandered. A magnificent avenue of broad-crowned bluegums—now, alas! cut down—marked the main entrance to the town. And a deep peace dwelt over it always.

Modest and unpretentious as was the setting, so were the people that lived in it. There were no racial acerbities, no cliques, no struggle for wealth or social distinction in those halcyon days. Aptly might all Pretorians be described as one large family. In the absence of theatres, or other public amusements, they were thrown on their own resources for entertainment. The commonest form which gaiety adopted was that of picnics to the "Fountain" or "Wonderboom," to which all and sundry were invited, and to which all contributed. The village was deserted whenever one of these frequent festivals took place. They commenced with a general exodus to the chosen spot soon after sunrise, and ended with a dance late at night.

Not that Pretoria was without other diversions. There was, to begin with, the daily session of the Landrost Court, in charge of dear old Skinner, once a mason (had he not built the church!), now magistrate; for though, under his firm sway, crime was rare, yet at intervals the police discovered some miscreant who had feloniously trespassed on

vineyard or melon-patch, or attempted to rob the midnight roost. In the latter case the evidence of feathers in the great-coat pocket, albeit circumstantial, was always regarded as conclusive evidence of guilt. How the audience enjoyed seeing the culprit hauled off to the local gaol, which graced the centre of the town ! And what breathless excitement when this very gaol became the scene of our one and only tragedy ! Attacked in the depth of night by a company of gay roysterers (there were such even in those days—the one blot on our stainless escutcheon), the octogenarian warder of the prison had bravely resisted their attempts to break his windows, by firing a revolver in their direction. His cartridge contained, unhappily, one of those ill-fated bullets that will find their billet, and the chance shot resulted in death. This catastrophe, and the subsequent trial of the old custodian—followed by acquittal, of course,—thrilled us for many a month.

Then we had the annual session of the Volksraad. Save in exceptional circumstances, such as the auctioneer episode I have related, its proceedings were not of a wildly exciting nature. The " House of Parliament " was a low, one-storey shed, with a verandah which during all hours of

the day harboured three patient, uncomplaining donkeys. Needless to say, the scoffers did not lose this opportunity for unflattering comparisons with the legislators on the other side of the wall.

Our chief event, however, was the "Nachtmaal," the three or four days during which, once every three months, all the Boers of the district visited Pretoria to attend Communion. They combined with this duty to their Church the weddings and christenings which had been saved up in the back-veld during the interval. This was the time also when the farmers disposed of their crops, and with their wives made their purchases for months ahead. Much political and parochial business was settled, too, at this occasion by the elders, while the housewives hobnobbed over unnumbered cups of coffee, and the younger generation (when not engaged in the trying task of storing up enough knowledge of the Catechism to enable them to become "accepted" members of the Church) spent the hours pleasantly enough in making and improving on each other's acquaintance—for this was also the chief opportunity of matrimonial developments.

Naturally the farmers were made most welcome by nearly all classes of the urban population—

chiefly so by the storekeepers, who reaped rich harvest indeed; but not less cordially by the tradesmen on whom they bestowed their custom, and by the Government officials. For at this time also rural taxes flowed into the coffers of the Government, and so made possible the payment of substantial instalments, at all events, of salaries in arrear. "Welcome to nearly all," I said, but never, never, to the Pretorian boy; for a feud had been sworn, a vendetta declared which only blood could wipe out; and in blood, to the extent of damaged noses, it often resulted. How could we stand by calmly when these bucolics not only occupied our one and only cricket-pitch—the church square—but in addition ruined it for weeks, if not months? Was it fair that while the young Boers were banded together in one solid phalanx [1] (an old application of the theory of "interior lines"), we town boys, whose homes were scattered over the straggling village, were divided for attack and defence, and often suffered grievously in consequence? Not that we did not retaliate. Did we not, in the dead of night, creep down to their tents and sever their supporting ropes with a few energetic if hurried

[1] The ox-waggons in which the Boers came, and in which they lived during their visit to the town, were clustered round the church.

sweeps of our trusty pocket-blades? And what if, caught in the act, we were ignominiously punished; did we not secure a final victory by deviating the water-course into the church square, making that tented field resemble a lake covered by boats in full sail, next morning?

Petty and trifling as these schoolboy feuds may appear, they are worth recording, since they had some influence on the relations between Boer and townsman which was not without result in later days.

I have referred to the harvest of the storekeeper, and badly it was needed by him in those days. His struggle for existence was a strenuous one. For while he was obliged to pay cash, that is British coin, for the goods he purchased in Natal, which were brought to him in huge waggons—each drawn by sixteen or eighteen oxen,—he received from his customers Government bank-notes, which had a forced currency, and were at times worth four or five shillings in the pound only, so that he was glad enough to take in barter the wool, skins, and ivory brought by the Boer, which could be sent for sale to the coast. English silver and gold were in great request, and carefully hoarded by their fortunate owners. The result was a great dearth of change, to relieve which each

storekeeper, butcher, and baker issued his own "goodfors,"[1] printed on small cardboard squares and signed by him, which passed as small currency.

This immense depreciation of the Treasury notes inflicted special hardship on the State official, whose salary was paid in them; and it severely handicapped the whole community.

Fortunately, and indeed necessarily, life was simple and unassuming. No attempt was made to keep up appearances, no endeavour to outshine one's neighbours. Our chief social events have been described. Add to these many dances, also managed on the joint contribution principle, and daily rides (horseflesh was cheap, and the keep of your steed at your door), and you have a sum of gaiety which did not imply extravagance. The great servant question, too, was easily dealt with. Native "boys" (*ætat.* eighteen to twenty-five) were to be hired at a heifer a year, or at a later, more extravagant stage, two heifers for that period; cost of heifer, say £2. The servants' food was of the plainest, and, once they were "set going," cheap enough; but that qualification is necessary, as these natives often tramped to *funa sebenza* (seek for work) for hundreds of miles, on the scantiest of rations, and took a deal of feeding

[1] I.O.U.'s.

up. On one occasion a dinner party was interrupted by the kitchen-boy knocking at the door and solemnly announcing, "Missis, ik is nou dik" ("Madam, now I am satisfied"); the hostess having despaired for days of ever being able to satiate his bottomless appetite.

With vegetables at hand in one's own grounds, meat and flour so cheap as to be had almost for the asking, the weekly household bills did not press heavily on even the poorest. Fowls, eggs, maize, and native wild fruit—often delicious—were brought to the doors in barter by native girls from neighbouring kraals. A row of brass buttons, a string of blue beads (value about one penny) purchased a hen or a large basket of maize; and if some special weeding was needed in the garden, a bevy of these dusky damsels was always ready to perform it, if in return they were allowed to fill their baskets with luscious yellow clingstone peaches. The abundance of this and other fruit was so great that it was looked upon as evidence of careful housewifery when they were given to the pigs.

This instance of the ease with which native labour could be obtained recalls another case in the same direction, though on a somewhat larger scale.

On first arriving in the country, my brother and I were sent to "Morgenzon," the farm of an uncle in the district of Rustenburg. The estate, a very fine one, well cultivated, contained amongst other crops large fields of maize and sugar-cane. These at times required a good deal of labour, more than the manhood of the kraal on the farm could furnish. Now Morgenzon was beautifully bushed and contained a lot of dry wood from fallen branches or trees, which would have had good value if we had not been so far from a market. Our nearest neighbour was the big location of the chief Magato. Its whole extent, like all ground near Kaffir kraals, was entirely cleared of wood. The temptation, therefore, to borrow enough for household purposes was strong; and so a constant stream of dark figures entered our bush each afternoon, and returned heavily laden in the dusk of the evening. As they did little damage, and for another reason presently to be divulged, we scrupulously refrained from interfering with them; but when extra hands were wanted, we two youngsters were sent out on horseback to obtain them. Hidden at the edge of the bush, we waited till a sufficient number of marauders (all of the fairer sex—if that term can be applied to ladies of a coffee-brown hue) was in our net, and then galloped up. Very

few attempted to flee ; almost all mutely held up the oxhide reims[1] brought to fasten their bundles. When we had collected a dozen or two, we returned to lay the spoils of our chase at our uncle's feet. Next morning a corresponding number of girls appeared, to "work out" their reims. Failure to come would have meant a complaint to the chief, the identification of the culprit by means of the reim, and condign punishment, so none ever forfeited their bail. They worked for a few days with the utmost good humour, and then returned to the kraal, having their reims handed back to them with a small present. On the following afternoon, wood-stealing was resumed with its former vigour.

While at Morgenzon, Mr. Paul Kruger was one of our nearest neighbours. In time of war he was Commandant-General of the Republic; during peace, merely a private citizen, though always one who was respected for his shrewdness, and force of character, so that his advice was often sought. He was already wealthy, the owner of large herds and of many farms. He was no longer young (I doubt whether he had ever been), but had not grown stout as he did in later days ; and when you noticed his breadth of shoulders, his

[1] Thongs.

figure akin to that of a prize-fighter, the stories told of his prowess in camp and veld seemed easily credible.

On one occasion a friend had fallen under the wheel of a heavily laden waggon, and was pinned down by it in great agony. No screw-jack was at hand. Kruger put his shoulder under a beam and lifted up the enormous weight until his comrade could be released.

He was a wonderful runner too, and when the chief Magato once boasted of the fleetness of the young men of his tribe, Kruger, to prove the superiority of the white race, challenged six of them, who were stationed at intervals, and all of whom he beat in succession.

The assertions of cruelty to the natives on his farm, of which he was accused at a later stage, were absolute and wilful slander. His victims would have belonged to Magato's tribe ; and through all its vicissitudes the Republic had no stauncher and more loyal allies, and no more contented subjects, than that chief and his followers.

But to return to Pretoria. As in all small self-centred communities, each individual took the keenest interest in the affairs of his neighbour—in his comings and goings, his business, and above all in his matrimonial aspirations while unattached,

and in subsequent developments when the knot had been tied. That occasional attempts at interference in the course of true love were made by people, disinterested or otherwise, was not to be wondered at; but that, as happened here, the Government, that is to say, the Head of the State, with his Executive Council, in meeting assembled, should officially intervene in the matrimonial affairs of one of the young ladies of Pretoria is surely unusual. Whereby hangs a tale.

A Mr. and Mrs. Bierman[1] were the proud parents of a daughter, whose charms had attracted the attention, soon fanned into love, of a rich Portuguese whom we shall call Mendoza. Unfortunately his passion was not reciprocated, and the young lady would have none of him, though her parents strongly supported his suit. The lover and parents then together approached the Government for succour in their hour of need. The result was effective. A proclamation was promulgated in the Government Gazette, solemnly prohibiting all ministers, magistrates, and other marriage officers from joining Miss Bierman in holy matrimony to any individual except the said Mendoza. Rather than see herself condemned to eternal spinsterhood, Miss Bierman capitulated. The weight of

[1] The names here given are fictitious.

artillery brought to bear on the poor girl seems somewhat unfair, and it may be doubted whether the end justified the means.

Something should be said about sport in and about Pretoria. *In* Pretoria should be read literally; excellent bags of snipe could be obtained in bogs quite near the centre of the village, while hares could be shot by moonlight in almost any garden. The commonage surrounding the town teemed with partridge and guinea-fowl, while three or four kinds of antelope were found in such numbers that many a "right and left" was brought down by our local Nimrods. Larger game—even lions—were not far to seek. We encountered some in 1872 at Ngaboomfontein, now a station some three or four hours' railway journey on the way to Zoutpansberg. Our journey was characteristic of the times. Mr. Van Boeschoten, the head of the Pretoria Public School, a very able man, later one of the Republic's leading officials, decided to visit some friends in the north. He was not wealthy, and, to cover the expenses of the journey, he purchased a stock of general merchandise for the purpose of barter with Boer and native. It half filled his large ox-waggon; his family occupied the rest of the space. The men of the party, and three of his pupils, including my

brother and myself, followed the waggon while it slowly trekked in daytime, and slept under it at night. Whenever we got to a farm or native location, our wares were displayed on the grass, and a lively trade was carried on until we "inspanned" again. It was the duty of us boys to collect the wood for the nightly fires. There was no lack of it, as we travelled through bush nearly all the way. We arrived at Ngaboomfontein at dusk, and after the oxen had grazed for an hour, they were fastened by their horns round the waggon, and we turned in under it. At about midnight we were startled out of our sleep by the roaring of several lions, at no great distance. The night was terribly dark, and the fires had died almost completely down. We soon replenished them, but found to our great consternation that there was very little wood left. It had been unusually late when we outspanned and we had been careless—for which we were now to be punished. The violent tugging of the oxen on the waggon showed that they at all events did not think themselves safe. There was no help for it—we had to set out in search of more fuel. One of us took a lantern ; the second, our only gun, loaded with slugs ; and the third brought in the necessary quantity of dry branches, which fortunately were

close at hand. But I do not think we felt comfortable, and our movements showed unusual alacrity. Soon fires were burning brightly round our encampment, and the lions did not molest us; but we found the tracks next morning. They had been all round the camp, just beyond the light of our fires.

CHAPTER III.

"VON DER KULTUR BELECKT."

THE first great change in our ideally simple aspect of life was brought about by the Diamond Fields. True, they had been lost to the Republic; but the influx of population, which seemed to us—in those pre-Johannesburg days—all but miraculous, created markets such as the Boer had never dreamed of, and of which he was not slow to take advantage. He thought nothing of the journey of weeks in his slow but sure ox-waggon, if he could dispose of his produce, his cattle, at such unprecedented prices. Even the last ten miles of bottomless sand did not deter him, though they broke many a yoke and skey, and the heart of more than one stalwart ox, for whose jaded powers this last final effort was too big a task. How strong the impression was of this unspeakable barrier guarding the "home of the gems" can best be shown by the comment of a Boer, who saw, for the first time in his life, a train start from Kimberley—start with much noise and escape of steam: "Ah, you are puffing

and groaning already! You wait a bit till you get into the yellow sand!"

Up went the prices of agricultural products, but up also, unfortunately, went the price of labour. The native, who had been glad to work with the farmer or in the townlets for a calf or two per year, swarmed in thousands to the place where he received good hard money; and so the first of South African labour questions arose. But there were other dangers brought by this trek of black labour from the utmost boundaries of the Republic. The Kimberley shopkeeper was by no means inclined to let the native depart with well-lined pockets, without a resolute attempt to relieve him of some of the responsibility which the possession of wealth is believed to carry with it. With gaudy blankets, multi-coloured umbrellas, gay kerchiefs did he tempt the departing labourer; but he soon found that there was no attraction to the native mind so powerful as that of a gun, be it the Brown Bess discarded by the British soldier, or a blunderbuss of even more ancient lineage. Why, those fools would buy even gas-pipes fitted with stocks, anything that would make a noise! So the returning bands of natives brought with them each his own weapon. Imagine the indignation of the Boer, who felt that the rifles

might be turned on him in the near future, and who knew them to be at all events less harmless than knobkerrie or even assagai!

Soon a most bitter controversy on this subject arose between the British Government and the Republic; a correspondence extending over years of protest, accusation, and recrimination, till it culminated in a diplomatic battle between President Burgers and Sir Henry Barkly.[1] Doubtless the President scored heavily; the facts were all with him, and he knew how to handle them—but to what end? The actual result was *nil;* the remoter effect an aftermath of ill-feeling and bitterness which in no little manner helped to promote later and more serious quarrels. You cannot charge a neighbour with bad faith, and all but prove your case, and then hope to remain on good terms with him. And if he is a big man, while you are few in inches, your moral victory is apt to have its physical dangers.

There were other results also caused by this new era of development. The advent of wealth, small comparatively as the stream of it was that reached the Republic, had ever-widening consequences. Consider how it changed the individual aspect. Hitherto the Boer—let us say from the

[1] High Commissioner and Governor of the Cape Colony.

Waterberg district—had been content enough to take his waggon-load of oranges to the High Veld or Free State, and to return at the end of a month, followed by a flock of sheep for which he had bartered his fruit. Money he seldom handled, except to the extent which was required for the payment of his petty taxes. For the rest, he brought his wool, wheat, or other products to the storekeeper with whom he dealt (and who looked upon him as one of his assets), there to exchange it for the sugar and coffee, voerchitz[1] and molvel,[1] and the other modest requirements of the year. Now he received cash, actual cash, for which the different merchants competed! He became eclectic, conscious of the power of money, ambitious even beyond his desire to "own more land," which had always been an overwhelming passion with him. In the old Colony, he had heard, there were cows which gave more milk, sheep which bore better wool, than his own: why not go and get some? So far, no doubt the result was all to the good; but his old simplicity, his content with things as they were, had gone—or was going—and with it went much worth retaining.

Another momentous development in our

[1] Printed linen, and "moleskin"; the latter the favourite wearing material of the Boer.

primitive conception of things was caused by the tales of suddenly acquired individual wealth. Why, the farmer who went to the Diamond Fields to sell his crops had met a "cousin," some distant connection of his, who only a year ago had been the poor but contented owner of a farm just like the visitor's; now he was rolling in money. See what diamonds had done! But might not happily some be found in the Transvaal also? Perchance on his own farm! Or perhaps gold?

Hitherto the attitude of the Dutch towards mineral discoveries had been simple and to the point. They realized the danger to their existence which would be caused by an influx of diggers, and placing the maintenance of their independence above all other considerations, they had decisively settled matters by punishing with a fine of £500 any person who should find gold, and who should be foolish enough to make his discovery public.

How different South African History would have been had this drastic law been maintained, need not now be considered.[1] For good or ill the die was cast when gold was discovered first by Edward Button at Eersteling in the Zoutpansberg

[1] The first Gold Law of the Transvaal was enacted in 1871.

district—later at Mac-a-Mac and Pilgrim's Rest in Lydenburg. Why, it seemed to be everywhere—to permeate the whole country! The very streets of Pretoria were searched for and yielded nuggets—few, it is true, and far between, but enough to justify the hope that our homes, our gardens, might rest on golden foundations. It was a time of high expectations, of sanguine speculation; yet our wildest dreams fell short of reality. Who could have foretold, in fever phantasies even, that within thirty or forty miles of us, the biggest gold-fields of this globe were slumbering, to be awakened in a few years by the sound of the miner's pick?

Yet had we known that, and all that was to follow, could we have blamed the Boers if they had changed the pecuniary penalty—high as it was—into sentence of death?

CHAPTER IV.

PRESIDENT BURGERS.

ALTHOUGH he was a man of undoubted ability, of great breadth of view, of high aims, Thomas François Burgers' tenure of office as President of the Transvaal cannot but be stamped as a failure. It ended in the first British annexation, of which it had undoubtedly been one of the contributing causes.

The collapse of the high hopes entertained when he assumed office was chiefly due to the fact that Mr. Burgers was far in advance of his time in the Transvaal.

After all, the changes in the direction of civilization which we have just considered were but slow in their working; the Republic was still in the grasp of poverty, and its resources limited. The people were ignorant and ill-educated, in the sense that, though all could write a little, and read enough to spell out their Bible, only the minority in or near towns had the opportunity of learning more. Into such surroundings burst, like a meteor,

a man of high culture, boundless energy not tempered by patience, and harbouring plans of progress for which the country was totally unripe.

Burgers, though he secured a majority at the election, never gained the confidence of the Boers, many of whom did not vote at all. He was one of the trio of Dutch ministers (with Kotzé of Darling, Naudé of Queenstown) who had been accused of heterodoxy, and although he, with the others, was triumphantly acquitted, he was believed to have liberal, if not dangerous views on doctrines which to the Boer were as the essence of his life. He was said—wrongly—to be a Freemason, which brotherhood ranked next to Atheism in the aversion of the Boer. Again, he was no administrator, extravagant in public matters, and though possessed of an eloquence which carried all before it for the moment, it was powerless to convince when its immediate effects had effervesced. Finally, he had no political tact. His paper victory, for instance, over Sir Henry Barkly, already mentioned, was one which had better been left ungained. Within the Republic he clashed against popular views everywhere. In one Volksraad session he induced the Raad to change the flag, the old Vierkleur dear to the heart of

the Boer ; next year, after a storm of indignation in the reaches of the Back Veld, the innovation was ignominiously cancelled. He had one thousand sovereigns struck from the first gold produced in the Transvaal, beautiful coins, now priceless to the collector, but at the time condemned by stern Republicans since they bore the President's portrait. He started the Delagoa Bay Railway with insufficient funds, raised in Holland by his personal effort, in the face of immense difficulties : the result was that almost all the money was wasted.

This Presidential journey to Holland had further consequences. He was well received there, and on more than one occasion he gave eloquent voice to his dreams of strengthening the Dutch element in South Africa as an equipoise to British influence. He appealed also for assistance in his plans for the better education of the Transvaalers—plans which he pursued with untiring energy, and which bear fruit to this day. The result was the immigration of a large number of Hollanders into the Transvaal. Many of these newcomers were men of culture and ability, amongst them E. J. P. Jorissen ("the man of epigrams," some of which deserve to live [1]), Dr. Rissik, Van Gorkom, and

[1] For instance, that to an English Colonel at a ball given

many others—professors, doctors, barristers,—all steeped in *fin de siècle* culture, linguists such as only Russians and Hollanders are.

The Boer did not know what to make of these new arrivals. He had met them before, in units, chiefly in the shape of parsons; but then they had prudently adapted themselves to their new environments. Now they came in battalions, and brought Holland with them. They spoke a language with which his "Taal" had but a slight bowing acquaintance, though he could read it; they were intellectually his immense superiors, and not anxious to hide this fact, while in the practical life of the veld they appeared more helpless than Boer lads of ten or twelve years; they were as liberal of thought in matters religious as he was wedded to his puritanical orthodoxy: frankly, he did not like them! Remember, in those days, and for long afterwards, Holland as a country had done nothing for the Transvaal, and but little for South Africa; for in the days of "Jan Compagnie" which preceded the British rule, the mother country had often been, in word and act, a step-mother indeed.

by Shepstone just before the first annexation. "We are dancing on the grave of the Republic," he said, "but then we all believe in a glorious resurrection!"

Nor did the Pretorian take kindly to the stranger, who disdained, and refused to join in, his somewhat materialistic gaieties; who held aloof from picnics, and, like the Tenth Hussars, "did not dance"; while upon the whole, he was about the worst horseman on the face of the earth, where indeed he generally found himself shortly after mounting his steed. How could they like a young man who did not play cricket, and who, if he fired a gun at all, was much more dangerous to his companion in the chase than to its object? On the other hand, the Netherlanders valued recreations which were caviare to most of the townsmen. Classical music (with no single rhythm or lilt in it, the Pretorian complained, to which you could swing round your partner!); *gezellige avonde* (social evenings) which were devoted to the latest products of Dutch and other Continental literature —how slow! So cliques were formed, and the happy days of "one-ness" departed for ever. Few indeed were they ("worunter meine Wenigkeit"[1] as the German modestly puts it) who kept in touch with both the old and new.

This introduction of social and political discord was to have grave consequences at a later stage.

[1] "Including my littleness."

Significantly enough, even the moderate influx of miners, due to the Lydenburg gold-fields, was to culminate in discontent—hardly a grateful attitude on the part of the digger, all things considered. Equality of treatment had been granted from the first. Two seats in the Volksraad were accorded to him, and his interests were efficiently represented in that body by men elected by himself—Messrs. Cameron, Piper, Macaulay, and Herbert Rhodes,[1] the first an American, the others Englishmen—one of them formerly a British officer. No doubt the gold-digger had his grievances; who has not? But the good sense of the miners themselves suggested that they were not worth quarrelling about, and the ill-feeling soon vanished, to return later on, in an accentuated form, at Moodies, where again it soon "petered out,"[2] as unfortunately also did their reefs. These were the first mutterings of a storm which, twenty-five years later, was destined to swamp the Republic.

Of much graver immediate import, however, was the Sekukuni war into which the Republic was now about to be plunged. The failure of this campaign not only wrecked the Burgers *régime*,

[1] Brother of Mr. Cecil Rhodes.

[2] Mining term, when a reef gradually pinches out and disappears.

but it also made possible, if it did not cause, the first annexation of the Transvaal by England. Before we deal with it, however, the position of the natives generally in the Republic should be considered.

CHAPTER V.

THE NATIVE IN THE TRANSVAAL.

Before the Boers reached their haven of rest in the two Republics, they passed through terrible struggles with the Zulus under Dingaan. The story of those days is one of heroic battles between a handful of whites, armed with muzzle-loaders, and all but overwhelming numbers of brave and bloodthirsty savages, in whose hands the assagai was no mean weapon. In more than one case, especially when the Boers were taken by surprise, whole laagers—men, women, and children—were massacred. These terrible occurrences have left their mark on the topography of Natal. The names Weenen (weeping), Blood River, Helpmakaar (stand by each other), bear eloquent witness of the past. In the main, however, the white more than held his own. In the open, on horseback, he was a match for any number of the foe. In laager, too, he generally succeeded in holding the attacking forces at bay. The waggons were drawn together and connected by thorn-bush

scherms.[1] Behind them the men stood with their guns, which were kept loaded by the women. And if any native warriors reached the laager, they were repulsed with axes or the butt of the gun. A most tragic incident was that of the massacre of seventy Boers under Piet Retief at Dingaan's Kraal. They had been promised Natal if they would recover for the king some cattle which had been looted by a neighbouring tribe. They had succeeded, and the contract by which the country was to be theirs had been signed, when suddenly the king gave a sign, and, unarmed as they were, they were butchered to a man.

The "Sunday Battle," which is still celebrated as a religious festival by the Boers, on each 16th December, finally and completely broke Dingaan's power. His successor, Panda, was always on good terms with the Boers.

When the Voortrekkers first entered the Transvaal, it had recently been overrun by the hordes of Moselikatse, a Zulu general who had fled from Zululand with his impi, and who, now defeated by the Boers, went north and founded the Matabele nation.

The subsequent native troubles in the Transvaal will be referred to later on. It is not to

[1] Screens.

be understood, however, that they indicate a general condition of conflict between the Boers and the many tribes of aborigines that dwelt within the borders of the Republic. The expeditions (for many of them could hardly be called campaigns) were spread over a large area and a long number of years, and most of them were not of a serious nature.[1]

It has already been pointed out that large tribes, such as that of the chief Magato in Rustenburg, were loyal and contented subjects of the Republic from first to last. To this name should be added that of Zebedela, of the Knobnoses under Albasini, and many others.

At least a million of aborigines were governed in the Transvaal by some fifteen or twenty thousand white men: that they ruled them with comparatively so little friction shows that the Boers knew how to handle the natives.

That the Boer Government as such was neither disliked nor feared by the natives is shown by the fact that more than one tribe on the south-western border, when it had the

[1] All of them together cannot be compared in magnitude with the British war against the Zulus in Natal, or with the many campaigns against Gaikas and Galekwas in the Cape Colony.

choice between British and Dutch rule, chose the latter. Elsewhere, too, many refugees, petty tribes of Swazis, Zulus, or others, who had had a "misunderstanding" with their head chiefs, crossed the border and settled down in the Republic.

The direct taxes imposed by the Republic upon the natives were light; and indirect taxation hardly touched them, since they had no wants on which custom duties could be levied, beyond a few hoes, blankets, and beads, and an occasional plough.

The guiding principle of Boer policy was that they would admit no equality between white and black in Church or State—a policy which is endorsed by nine-tenths of the British South Africans in the Transvaal and in Natal. The white race is enormously outnumbered, and if these Colonies are to remain white man's country in any sense of the word, full civic rights cannot be granted to the aboriginal population, the less so as the natives are as yet totally unfitted for such a privilege, since they still are in a stage of mental childhood.

How they are to be dealt with when they emerge from it, as in isolated cases they have undoubtedly already done, will be the most diffi-

cult problem of the future. Fortunately, it need not be considered for many a day. The gulf of the thousand years or so which divides the natives from civilization cannot be bridged in half a century.

This state of intellectual immaturity of the governed imposes, however, the greater obligation upon their rulers to deal with them as a good father of a family would with his children.

Upon the whole, the Boer did not fail in this duty. Cases of friction which can be traced to land-hunger can be given, but were not frequent. As a rule, conflicts were caused by cattle-lifting, or by refusal to pay taxes. Sometimes they arose from quarrels between the natives themselves, which had to be quelled by the whites, and which were really a matter of police, had such a force been available.

The charges of rapacity and cruelty to natives made against the Boers may at once be dismissed. How could it be explained that so many important tribes were their loyal subjects—and others beyond their borders, such as the Swazis, their allies—if these accusations contained any truth?

Individual cases of ill-treatment, or worse, can, of course, be found. So they can everywhere

else where races of different colours meet. But it would be as preposterous to draw any general conclusions from these as it would be from the cases of wife-beating which occur daily in any of the large cities of Europe.

To show how rare such occurrences were, I may say that in the four years during which I acted as Public Prosecutor and Magistrate, I can recall scarcely one of any serious nature. When they did occur, they were followed by punishment: that white and black knew. Of this one incident may be given.

A Boer—S.—had in his employ a young native who had contracted the habit of "running away," to be brought back by his father as soon as he got to the kraal. The Boer was on his way to Pretoria when he detected the lad once more in the act of desertion, and to prevent its repetition he made the boy sit at the back of the waggon, and tied the chain with which the wheels are locked at steep declivities, round the native's body. In some unexplained way the chain dragged the boy between wheel and waggon, and, when discovered, he was dead.

It was a serious matter, but at the worst a case of culpable homicide, in which a white jury —if there had been any tendency to protect the

white at the expense of the black—would doubtlessly have brought in a verdict of acquittal. Yet S., a man of courage, left wife, children, and farm, and fled the country.

To rule the natives is no easy task. Their laws and customs, which have been abrogated only where they clash with the criminal code, often altogether differ from our conceptions of right and wrong. To give one case. The son of a petty chief called Tromp, whose kraal was near Nylstroom, in the Waterberg district, had married the daughter of a chief just beyond the border. The wife ran away: under Kaffir law the husband was entitled to claim back from her father the cattle which had been paid for her. To obtain them would, however, be a difficult and somewhat risky proceeding, since the husband would have to do so in a country which knew no law except the will of its chief. He therefore quietly remained at his kraal, situated on Krantzkop, a large mountain, at the foot of which ran the main road between Kimberley and the north, and watched the many batches of natives which came back from the fields, carrying the heavy bundles of blankets and the like, purchased by months of toil. Amongst them were some of the tribe of his late father-in-law.

These were attacked by the deserted husband, assisted by his brothers, and after having been unmercifully beaten, their bundles were taken from them. The assaulted men brought their complaint to me as Justice of the Peace: they seemed to acquiesce in the loss of their property, but were very bitter about the way they had been handled. Tromp's sons were arrested. Their father, the old chief, came down in great wrath, and when it was explained to him why they had been lodged in gaol, he was very indignant.

"Matow" (the border chief) "owes my son many cattle," he said. "He is a chief like me, and these people here" (the complainants) "are only his dogs: everything his subjects have belongs to him, so my son took only what was his debtor's; and yet you arrest him!"

The native has absolutely no idea of the logical sequence of cause and effect. A complainant came to me once, who said he had been beaten by his master because he demanded his money. "Wages?" I inquired. "No, those are always paid on the day; but the money for my little cottage that has been burned. I built it with my own hands, but it cost me £10 in material."

"But surely your master did not burn it?"

"Oh, no! The master would never do that; but if it had not been for the master's children, the house would be standing there still to this day."

"Did *they* set fire to it?"

"No, no, sir! Why should they? But they caught a bird."

With much trouble I got to the bottom of the story. The farmer's children had given the bird to those of the servant. It had escaped under the bed; the piccaninnies had searched for it with a candle; the bed had caught fire, and so the cottage had burnt down.

"And now, when I ask master for my money, he beats me!"

The native's superstition, his belief in witchcraft and in his "doctors" (magicians) were a further unending cause of trouble: the latter's treatment of the sick was often gruesome in the extreme. Incisions all over the body, to let the evil spirit out, and ointments of fearful and wonderful concoction, to prevent its coming back again, were held in great respect; but they resulted in death in more than one case, when the original disease had not been of a grave nature.

"Smelling out" was still more serious. When

a chief or other important personage fell sick, the witch-doctor would be consulted, and after weird ceremonies and incantations he pointed out the person who by his magic arts had caused the illness—generally a man of wealth. The victim's cattle were confiscated, and he himself killed, or at all events driven from the kraal. The natives could never understand that practices like these were crimes. This belief in witchcraft was not confined to their own illness: cattle, too, were believed to be bewitched when they happened to die from unknown causes. An instance to the point also illustrates the native's courage. Isepu, a refugee Swazi, lived in the Standerton district. His tiny kraal of four or five huts, each the dwelling of one of his wives, occupied one end of a valley, at the other end of which some half-dozen natives lived in another small kraal. The latter had lost a few cows, and charged Isepu with having killed them by magic. He heard of the accusation, and rode over to his neighbours to have an explanation. They invited him into a hut, where they set upon him and severely assaulted him. Isepu returned to his kraal, came back with his rifle, and then challenged his enemies to come out and fight. They, however, declined the combat, although he insulted and taunted them

until both his voice and his patience were exhausted. He then bethought himself of another expedient. A flock of his enemies' goats was grazing near him, and he began to fire amongst it. When he had killed several, their owners streamed out of the kraal to attack him. He dismounted, sent his horse home with a cut of his sjambok, and faced the men as they drew near. He allowed them to come so close to him that the nearest was raising his arm to throw his assagai, then killed him on the spot with a shot through the heart; the others fled.

Isepu was tried and sentenced to ten years' hard labour. But the natives would never admit that his punishment was deserved. Isepu had been accused of witchcraft; he had been cruelly beaten when overpowered by numbers; and he had not fired till he had done so in self-defence; any of these reasons, the natives said, were surely enough to justify him!

One charge made against the Boers—that of slavery—may be disposed of in a few words. At the time of the 1877 annexation, diligent search was made for some one to be liberated; but to the great disappointment of Exeter Hall and its friends, not a single individual could be found whose fetters might have been sundered.

Another matter should be briefly referred to. Although the Boers refused to the "coloured people" equality in Church as well as State, this did not imply that the former were opposed to the natives becoming Christians. As a matter of fact the Dutch Reformed Church sent out a number of missionaries amongst them.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SEKUKUNI WAR.

The Republic, as we have seen, had not been without its native complications before the Sekukuni campaign. At times they had ended peacefully, as when Gamejaan, thereafter called "The Bolter," had made a moonlight flitting with his men, their multitudinous wives, and yet more profuse piccaninnies (some dark-skinned Æneas perhaps carrying pick-a-back a tottering, kaross-clad Anchises); taking them all, with herds, pigs, and poultry, away over the nearest border in a long night's march. More often they led to small expeditions; but always, or nearly always, the Boers had been victorious. True, in one case a townlet, the prettiest in the country (Piet Potgieter's Rust), had to be abandoned. But fever had something to do with that —at all events it served as a pretext—and it was the sole exception. In the stern struggles with Dingaan and Moselikatse the Boers had proved their prowess, and the superiority of their long heavy rifles over the assagai, whether launched

from afar or broken in half to serve as a stabbing spear when the Zulu war-cry sounded, and "Bulala umtagati!" ("Kill the wizards!") belched forth from a thousand throats. Still, much as the Kaffir feared the white, the ease with which the farmers' fat cattle could be stolen was a temptation which could not always be resisted. Then came retaliation. And no doubt at times the provocation came from the white, who crowded the native out of the best veld and maize-lands, and insisted upon payment of taxes, the necessity for which could never be grasped by the native mind. Then followed pillage of solitary farms, and murder of their inhabitants, young and old; and stern vengeance after that. For the Boers' method, if slow, was sure. A commando was raised, first in the districts threatened, then, if necessary, further afield. Those unable or unwilling to come furnished waggons or oxen, horses or provisions, so that the commissariat presented little difficulties—none indeed as soon as the Burghers arrived in the enemy's country, for their first act was to capture the native's cattle, and to take away his crops stored in huge baskets in kloof or koppie. Then came gradual investment, and the natives, after enduring the hardships of a siege, either fled at night—to be known as a tribe

no more—or surrendered, when they were removed from their fastnesses and located where they would be powerless for mischief in days to come.

To subdue Sekukuni was a more difficult task. He was a powerful chief, the head of many a tribelet; his mountain strongholds were said to be impregnable; his warriors included not only the less brave Maketis, prepared to fight only when protected by bush or kranz, and happiest when behind their stone-piled schanses, but also kraals of refugee Zulus and Swazis, who had fled to him when a quarrel with their own chiefs threatened their being "wiped out" at a moment's notice. Besides, the greed of Kimberley merchants had largely armed his men with rifles, which, however inefficient, were bound to impair the superiority which powder and ball had hitherto maintained over the assagai.

This turbulent chief now "got out of hand" altogether. He refused to acknowledge the authority of the Transvaal, although he lived hundreds of miles within its acknowledged frontiers; and drove several Boers from their farms in the neighbourhood of his kraals.

It was President Burgers' first war (destined also to be his last), and he intended to take no risks; so a force was called together such as had

never been gathered for a similar purpose. Over two thousand mounted Burghers assembled, with four hundred waggons, which formed, even in three lines, a convoy of miles; and this force was supported by the newly imported Krupp guns in charge of a few German artillerymen, and the President's Schützencorps from Rustenburg. The President decided to take the field himself, to the great, if concealed, disapproval of the Burghers, who wanted their own generals, elected by popular vote, and not "a dominé" (parson) to lead them.

At first all went well. Matebi's Kop, "the Gibraltar of South Africa," a typical native stronghold, was taken at the second assault; not without loss of life. The name of Charlie Mears is the first in the long roll of Pretorians who were to give their life for the Republic. A few days later, by great good fortune, the Potchefstroom commando surprised—on a Sunday—an impi of Maketis warriors on the flats on their way from one native bulwark to another, and inflicted a very severe loss on them before they reached shelter. Then came a halt. The commando had approached a large kraal of Zulu refugees who were known to be Sekukuni's best fighters. A council of war was held. A German, Von

Schlickmann, proposed a night attack, but his suggestion was rejected. He left the council in disgust and secretly enrolled a band of volunteers to set fire to the kraal that evening. But some one blabbed, and he and his men were promptly arrested, tried by court-martial, and received a serious wigging. "What can it matter to you? we only risk our own skins," Von Schlickmann pleaded. "That is all very well," a grey-headed commandant answered, "but you will get yourself stuck up in some corner, and we shall have to fetch you out, and then some of our people might get hurt. What's the use of hurrying? We are sitting here on the water, and the niggers will have to come on or clear!" The old patriarch was right: a few days later the kraal was abandoned by the natives.

A few words about Von Schlickmann. A German cavalry officer, he fought with distinction in the 1870 war; then became attaché to Count von Arnim in Paris, and fell with his chief when the latter was crushed by Bismarck. He next appeared in Kimberley, where he took part in a serious rising of the diggers; for the English Government also had its troubles with the mining population in the Diamond Fields, as it had on the gold-fields of Australia. Von Schlickmann then

came to the Transvaal to serve the Republic—and to die for it; for he was killed in a skirmish when in command of the Boer volunteers in the forts, to be spoken of later. "Tell the President I died doing my duty," were the last words he spoke.

As the old typical Boer commando is now a thing of the past, it will be as well to describe twenty-four hours of its ordinary course while on trek.

The cattle and horses practically depended on the veld for their sustenance, so a couple of hours early each morning had to be given to their grazing. They were sent out in charge of guards, while the rest of the men occupied themselves in preparing their rations. These consisted of meat and flour only. Everything beyond that was looked upon as luxuries, which the Burghers, if they desired them, had to provide themselves; most of the men also brought large stocks of biltong (sun-dried meat) and rusks. The meat was generally grilled on iron ramrods; the flour turned into dough-nuts, baked in fat; these were known as "Stormjaars" (stormers), from a popular tradition that they had on one occasion been used as missiles in an attack on a hostile position, which illustrates their weight and consistency.

At about 10 a.m. the laager broke up. The waggons were inspanned and commenced the trek, where the nature of the country made it possible, in three parallel lines. No roads existed, of course, but some kind of a track was found through the bush, and where dongas barred the way rudimentary crossings were cut out by the spade. With so much help in the shape of drivers and oxen at hand, almost any obstacle could be easily overcome. The mounted men, when not acting as advance or rear guards, forced their ways as best they could through the scrub and bush, as naturally there was not room for them on the waggon tracks; they were, moreover, glad enough to get away from the all but impenetrable cloud of dust which generally hung over the line of waggons.

The trek stopped at about four o'clock at a place selected by the laager commandant. Each of the three lines would divert its course in a direction which eventually resulted in forming the laager in the shape of a triangle. This simultaneous enclosure of the large inner space, covered with long grass, often led to the capture of hares and small antelopes, which only discovered that they were surrounded when the enclosure had been completed. On one occasion an ant-

eater was so found. It burrowed down into the soft earth as fast as the natives could follow it with spade and pick, until one of them cut a hole in the animal's tail and inserted a reim by which half a dozen held it until it was unearthed.

After the cattle had been grazing for a few hours they were driven into the camp, which was then secured for the night, the waggons being interlocked and the spaces between them filled by thorn-bush. Sentries were posted all round the laager, often in shallow holes dug in the sand; and stronger outposts[1] were sent some half a mile away, in the direction from which an attack might be expected.

The horsemen, fatigued as they were by accompanying the waggons at a snail's pace through the six hours' trek, generally patrolled the country once more before sunset; at times there were night-rides also. On one occasion a small detachment had been ambushed, and one of them had been wounded. They sent for help, and some twenty of us started at sunset to bring them in. We found them some twelve miles away, constructed a litter for the wounded Burgher, and the weary march back to the camp commenced. It was a wonderful night, lit by a brilliant moon,

[1] Called "Brandwachts."

but we were too tired to appreciate its beauties, and had the greatest difficulty in keeping ourselves from falling asleep on our horses, which would involve a spill, of course. So difficult indeed was it to keep one's eyes open that we welcomed our turn of carrying the stretcher, and dreaded getting on horseback again; for our mounts could not be relied upon to pick their way, since there were a number of trees about, just high enough to allow the passage of the horse but not of its rider. So when we nodded at all, the result would be that we found ourselves entangled in a branch bristling with cruel thorns. When we pulled our horse back, our face streaming with blood, we were wide awake enough—for a time. None of us required any rocking to sleep when we reached camp with the dawn.

Every fourth or fifth day would be one of rest for the cattle. We generally spent it in hunting. If in quest of rooibuck (Palla), we were all mounted and brought our rifles. A very wide circle was drawn round the herd—often consisting of hundreds of animals, very few of which escaped. As we closed in, we, of course, fired outside the ring only. More exciting, however, was the chase on foot, at which only assagais and revolvers were permitted. A long elliptical line, open at one end,

would enclose the length of some valley, covered with grass, bush, and high reeds. Natives would act as beaters at the bottom of the ellipse, while a few horsemen at the open end prevented the game breaking out in that direction. Soon the fun became fast and furious. Numbers of reed-buck, duikers, steenbuck, oribi,[1] and hares, tried to escape in all directions, and, close as we were together, many of them got away scot-free, as the assagai is not very effective in unpractised hands. Occasionally our drive contained more than we had bargained for—on one occasion a huge boa constrictor, which was killed by a shot from a revolver.

As we entered the haunts of our enemies, shooting was forbidden altogether; the punishment was pretty severe. One of our Pretorians, who could not resist the temptation of firing at a crocodile, was condemned to a two hours' ride on one of the cannon: after this experience he said that he would not interfere again with a saurian, even if he discovered it eating his mother-in-law.

In camp these intervals on the trek were generally spent in games, often approaching horse-play. A frequent pastime was to give some man, who had made himself obnoxious, a taste of

[1] Different kinds of smaller antelopes.

"blanket tossing" translated into Boerese. A fresh ox-skin had slits cut into it all round the edge, into which the hands of some dozen sturdy men were inserted. The victim soon discovered the difference between this game and that performed with the softer blanket; in fact, it ended in broken limbs on several occasions. Sports, in a primitive form, were also held, but the favourite recreation was the game of yokes-skeys. These hard, pointed pieces of wood—some fifteen inches long—were pegged into the sand, and thrown at by similar missiles. It sounds quite simple, but there was room for a good deal of skill. The stakes were generally a hand's length from a roll of tobacco. This was really the national game of the Boer—at all events it was the only one he knew.

Sunday was spent in religious services from dawn till bedtime. On week-days, too, every morning was ushered in by the sound of psalms from tent or waggon.

But to return to the Sekukuni campaign.

After leaving the "Zulu kraal" the commando met with no further checks, though long-range skirmishes with natives concealed in the rocks and bush were of almost daily occurrence. Then came the attack on Sekukuni's stad—and abject failure.

To begin with, the Burghers were getting tired

of the campaign, which indeed they had not entered into with much enthusiasm from the first. The President was becoming more unpopular, and the men less inclined to follow him every day. Next, Sekukuni was a hard nut to crack, as Lord Wolseley found three years later, when he had the assistance of the Swazis, who came to wipe out old scores. Last, not least, attack was not to the Boers' liking, though they "came on" well enough in later days.[1] Anyhow, here they preferred Fabian tactics. Not so the President. He knew the country could not stand the strain of a long campaign, entered upon on so extravagant a scale. So once more his eloquence prevailed in council.

Sekukuni's chief kraal was situated at the base of a steep, bold mountain ridge, honeycombed with caves and schanses. A large force was sent by a circuitous way to the top, to join hands with those who were to attempt the ascent from below. The former's was a comparatively easy task, since they had no "bad country" to encounter; and as soon as they were discerned against the sky-line, the whole commando set itself in

[1] Their attempt to take Ladysmith by assault on January 7th, 1900, has been described by British officers to have been as brave and determined an effort as any known in history.

motion for attack on the stad, and the schanses above it.

The kraal itself was but feebly defended, and was soon in the hands of some forty or fifty men, consisting chiefly of Burghers from Pretoria district and town, led by brave Field-cornet Roos. But where were the others?

To get to the kraal, several deep dongas had to be passed, and here the horses were left behind—and so were the vast majority of the men. Beyond this the Burghers refused to go.

The advance guard under Roos had in the meantime arrived at the first schanses, setting fire to the kraal behind it. Obviously, this handful could not push on alone, yet no reinforcements came. Those on the summit too, though they had descended some distance, not without casualties, waited for the promised advance of the larger force, which from their eyrie they could see at a standstill.

Heroic efforts were made by Vecht-Generaal[1] Smit, ex-President Pretorius, and the President himself, to induce the "donga-dwellers" to advance, but all in vain. No appeal, no threat of consequences could induce the sullen bands to move. Soon Roos and his men found themselves in serious difficulties. With the numerous enemy

[1] "Fighting General."

growing bolder each minute in front, and the burning town in the rear, theirs was not an enviable position, and one from which retreat was a ticklish task. Yet to stay was worse; and with luck befriending, they at last managed to rejoin the main body, which then returned to camp, a movement followed by the precipitous retreat of those on the summit of the mountain.

The next phase is characteristic of the democratic spirit, the utter absence of all discipline, which prevailed in this commando. A mass meeting was called—or rather, it called itself—and was addressed by several leaders, who did not mince words; last of all by the President, in a speech as eloquent as any ever essayed to charm a multitude. But the Burghers refused to hear him. Soon he was interrupted by cries of "Huis toe!" ("Homewards!"), ever growing in strength and number; and before he had completed his last sentence, waggons were already being inspanned on the homeward trek. In another hour the laager had been broken up, and three-fourths of the Burghers were on the road back to their districts.

Fortunately, the men of Lydenburg and Middelburg remained staunch. These districts could not remain undefended; yet the whole burden of protecting them could not be thrown on their

inhabitants only, for long. After many a Krygsraad [1] a plan of operations was evolved. The commando, reduced to some 500 men, under Commandant Ferreira, would proceed to Kruger's Post, the most advanced point on the Lydenburg side of Sekukuni, where the Boers—or rather their wives and children—were in laager. Some forts were to be built, and manned by paid volunteers. After that, each citizen-soldier would be free to return to his home. The President, despair in his heart, but preserving a bold and cheerful front, would accompany the force.

This plan was accomplished—not without some excitement on the way. Forts Burgers and Weeber were constructed, and put in charge of Von Schlickmann; and then back to Pretoria—beaten and disgraced.

Funds had to be obtained for the pay of the volunteers, so the Volksraad met, and reluctantly, morosely granted the irreducible amounts. But to raise these even, a special war-tax had to be imposed—as high as up to £10 per farm.[2] So large a call had never before been made, and though it could be (and generally was) paid in kind, chiefly in cattle, so unheard-of a burden

[1] Council of War.

[2] According to its acreage.

caused the deepest resentment and discontent; and its payment would unquestionably have been refused, but for the fact that failure to collect it would mean the dispersion of the volunteer force, and imminent risk of rapine and murder to the inhabitants of the threatened districts.

It was at this crisis, at this conjunction of circumstances miraculously favourable to his purpose, that Shepstone appeared on the scene.

CHAPTER VII.

THE FIRST ANNEXATION.

Sir Theophilus Shepstone had been for many years the virtual ruler of Zululand, and of the natives living in Natal. The son of a missionary, a man of great ability and diplomatic dexterity, plausible, dignified, "Somtseu"—to call him by his native name—held the Zulus under absolute control. Cetewayo regarded him as a father, the ordinary native almost as a god.

This gentleman was selected for a mission compared with the audacity of which the subsequent Jameson Raid was sane, simple, and rational; yet he accomplished his object.

The plight in which the South African Republic found itself through the failure of the Sekukuni campaign had been keenly watched in the neighbouring Colonies, and by Great Britain. Naturally there was always some risk of the conflagration spreading and—the bugbear of South Africa—a general native rising ensuing; though, in this case, the danger was but small,

since the volunteers held Sekukuni well in hand. Indeed, he was treating for peace; and no other native tribe showed signs of unrest. Natal—or rather the Zulus—had, however, a quarrel of its own with the Transvaal. A valuable strip of land was in dispute, and England backed the native claim.

Moreover, there had been already a considerable influx of miners—many from Natal—who exploited the Lydenburg gold-fields, which began to prove of great value, and there had been, as we have seen, some dissatisfaction against Republican rule amongst them: this was now remembered also.

No doubt, too, the British Government had often regretted (especially at times of friction, such as the quarrel over the Diamond Fields) that it had relinquished the Orange Free State, once a British Colony, and had recognized the independence of the Transvaal, founded as it was by what had been once British subjects.

At all events, it was believed the time had arrived to profit by the situation, and to correct previous errors; and so Shepstone was sent up, with a free hand, but with undoubted authority to absorb the Republic if he found matters propitious.

He was supported by a force of *twenty-five* Natal Policemen, under Lieutenant Phillips.

As already stated, matters were altogether in favour of his schemes. The Boers were utterly disgusted with their President, their Volksraad, and, to some extent, with themselves. A cloud of apathy seemed to have settled on them; a feeling that nothing mattered as long as things were changed. As we now know, that was on the surface only, but it deceived even people who should have been able to feel "the pulse of the nation." Still, Sir Theophilus walked with wary steps. His quarters in Pretoria became a salon, where all who had grievance or complaint against the Government were cordially welcomed; and Mr. "Slypsteen" (*anglicé* = whetstone), as the Boers called him, did not disdain to visit them at their homes, and in their tents at Nachtmaal time. Speaking the Taal to perfection, courteous, plausible, he won every heart; moreover he distributed largesse with a liberal, if unobtrusive, hand. Many a Boer youngster was made happy by the present of a concertina, and hardly a little girl could be found in Pretoria who did not wear a locket or bracelet, the gift of the "dear old man." Sad to relate, the cost of every one of these trifles was sub-

sequently surcharged by a heartless British Government against Shepstone's own salary, as "unauthorized expenditure for which no vouchers have been produced."

So some months sped on. Pretoria, at all events, felt what was impending, and some of its leading men sought to avert the doom by obtaining a large number of signatures to petitions in favour of confederation with the British Colonies, to which the Volksraad was inclined to accede; but that effort came too late, and on April 12th, 1877, the Transvaal Republic was annexed to the British Empire.

Sir Theophilus was less happy in his proclamations and in an "Address to the People" issued by him, than he was in personal intercourse. There was one phrase which was specially unfortunate. He was prone to declaim about the "benefit of the people." Now when dividing the spoils of the chase, or a slaughtered ox, the Boers regard as the choicest morsel the "binnevet" (inside fat), and the first comment was, "Oh, the wretch! what he wants—as he says himself—is our 'binnevet'!" Both proclamation and address contained a number of most unpalatable charges against the Republic, which were the less to the liking of the Boers since they were based largely on phrases culled from the

oratorical flights of the President when addressing the Volksraad, with which body Mr. Burgers was then on terms of mutual bitter recrimination.

Another clause, however, was more in favour with the Burghers; it freed them from the war-tax, which had indeed been as a nightmare to them.

To be brief—the country tacitly, if sullenly, acquiesced. President and Volksraad launched a protest which was, however, hardly looked upon as serious even by themselves. The President advised all officials to remain in the service of the country, and the most prominent Boer leaders, such as Kruger and Piet Joubert, set them a good example by accepting their back pay out of the British treasury, which sums were, however, subsequently refunded.

For there was an awakening indeed! Not many months had elapsed before the Boer realized that he had been caught napping, that he had allowed his cherished independence to slip out of his grasp in an apathetic moment, and from that time he set diligently to work to recover it.

CHAPTER VIII.

PRETORIA DURING THE ANNEXATION.

The advent of the British Government brought with it an immediate and considerable increase in prosperity to Pretoria. It received a large garrison—horse, foot, and artillery. A number of officials were imported from the neighbouring Colonies. Merchants from afar erected stores, compared to which the old emporiums —of which we had been inclined to be rather proud—were mere sheds. Professional men, artisans, tradesmen, almost exclusively British, arrived in ever-increasing numbers, and the whole aspect of the place underwent a radical change.

As already mentioned, a line of social cleavage had already appeared between the Hollanders and the older Pretorians. The former were now joined by the irreconcilable patriots—few in number, but staunch to the extent of refusing all intercourse with the foreign invader. As a

natural consequence, the other party was thrown more and more into the arms of the purely British element of recent advent. Social life was dominated by the new official and military arrivals. In this way, many who by no means approved of the *coup d'état*, or subsequent developments, were captured by and identified with the "English set." The consequence was that the Boers, who now began to growl in unmistakable manner, found themselves altogether out of touch with their former officials and their business friends. Possibly, too, the boyish quarrels between town and veld were not without influence, when the generation, which had indulged in them, attained manhood. At all events, be the causes what they may, British rule obtained a very important backing in Pretoria, and to a less extent in many smaller towns.

Later on, some Boers, too, were found amenable to the same influences; indeed, a few of the most prominent of them joined a Government-appointed Executive, which was created in partial but altogether inadequate fulfilment of the promises in Shepstone's annexation proclamation. Amongst them were Holtzhausen of Middleburg, Joubert of Potchefstroom, Nel of Rustenburg, Lourens

Geldenhuis of Pretoria, and almost, but not quite (for he withdrew at the last moment), General Adriaan Stander of Standerton. All these were men of standing, and belonged to the best Boer families; but it should be noted that from the moment of their acceptance of office in the British service, they lost every shred of the influence they had possessed to so large a degree; nor did any of them subsequently recover their position. The Boer trusts fully when he trusts at all; it is not difficult to win his confidence; but, like all persons of strong if narrow views, he seldom trusts twice—a lesson that should be taken to heart by all in power who come in touch with him.

In the meantime we were becoming "plus Royal que le Roi," with sometimes most ludicrous results. Sir Theophilus and the Chief of his Staff, the popular Colonel (now General) Brooke, R.E., were in immense demand as godfathers, and many a young Pretorian, of either sex, is still suffering from the result of this excess of loyalty. "Theophila Brookiana" is not a euphonious combination. Indeed, people went beyond that occasionally. Pretoria was startled—too startled to laugh, almost—by an announcement in a local paper that "Johannes Lodovicus Sarel

Bekker"[1] (the scion of an honoured Dutch family) "had divested himself of the name aforesaid, and had adopted that of John Louis Charles Baker, by which name he desired in future to be known!" Another advertisement appeared next morning, signed by "Kievit," the local Hottentot toper, to the effect that he had dropped the name of Kievit, and adopted that of Johannes Lodovicus Sarel Bekker, so giving shelter and habitation to the discarded homeless appellation.

While Pretoria and some of the larger towns of the Transvaal were thus becoming anglicized, the reverse process was taking place in the districts. The developments there were of a much slower nature, but every day the number of those who were content to remain under British rule decreased. Two deputations were sent to Europe by the Boers to ask that the independence of the country should be restored. Both came back with decisive refusals, and the discontent became daily more general and deep-seated. More than three years, however, elapsed before any attempt to "throw off the yoke" was seriously contemplated.

It will here be necessary to make a pause in

[1] The names are fictitious.

this narrative, and to devote some chapters to the characteristics of this handful of people who were about to engage in a desperate struggle with the mighty British Empire.

CHAPTER IX.

THE BOER OF OLD.

THE "Old Boer" was probably one of the strangest survivals of a dead past which the world has known. A legacy of the seventeenth century, he could preserve his idiosyncrasy only while he kept out of contact with what we call civilization. It is almost miraculous how circumstances combined to preserve the type. After he left the parent stock in Holland, two hundred years or so ago, his new environments were such that they kept him from all outside influences. Unlike the Englishman who went to India, be it as official, soldier, merchant, or planter, he quitted his native land never to return to it. He did not send his children "home" for their education, nor did he seek a wife there. Later arrivals were speedily absorbed. So strong indeed was his individuality, his virility, that when the staunchest, the most determined people in France—the Huguenots—came to South Africa, he succeeded in assimi-

lating them completely. After a few generations nothing, or all but nothing, was left of their language or their habits; though naturally they had an immense influence in the formation and evolution of the race, since they brought French intelligence and nimbleness of mind to correct the duller tendencies of the class in Holland from which most of the progenitors of the Boer have sprung. When the Boer came to South Africa he was thus cut off not only from all communication with Europe, but often from closer touch with his fellow-men. Whether sent out to farm for "Jan Compagnie," or whether he tilled the soil and guarded his herds on his own account, he had elbow-room from the first. A visit to the out-settlements in those days was one of no small risk and danger; one that had to be prepared for with much care, and one which it often took months to accomplish.

At a later stage, civilization came to him in the shape of the British occupation of the Cape, which was followed by considerable immigration, by the construction of good roads, and by the introduction of many other improvements. But the Boer, or at all events the most venturesome, and therefore the best of them, would have none of this, and trekked into the wilderness. Not that the

aversion to things new was the only or indeed the chief cause of the movement; but it contributed to it, and the effect was that the nineteenth century lost this opportunity of impinging itself on the seventeenth.

As a single instance of how ideas survived this interval of hundreds of years, the aversion and horror with which the old Transvaal Boer regarded the Roman Catholic religion may be mentioned. A "Papist" was in his eyes a man to be feared and shunned. Now all the generations which had lived in South Africa had practically never come in contact with Roman Catholics at all; certainly, if they had, there would not have been the slightest reason to dread any ill of them. But the Boer ancestor, when he left Holland, had carried with him a very vivid sense of the sentiment which was inspired by Alba and the Spanish Inquisition; another ancestor — the Huguenot—had brought very poignant memories of St. Bartholomew's Night; and these impressions had been unconsciously bequeathed by father to son for two hundred years! A tenacious race, and one slow to forget!

The metal of which the Boer had been cast had again been strengthened and toughened by his never-ending struggle with savage nature, and

still more savage man. The history of the old Voortrekkers is as rich in heroism, in acts of devotion and courage, as the annals of any order of chivalry, be it the Knights of the Cross at Malta, or the Marien-Ritter of Eastern Prussia. Imagine the indomitable courage and audacity which prompted a handful of men to brave the absolutely unknown—unknown, at all events, save that it was certain to harbour countless dangers from wild beasts and relentless savage. Elsewhere, too, of course, pioneers have dared much, have taken their lives in their hands, and have suffered, as here, untold privations. But elsewhere they had some succour to fall back upon; they knew that they would be followed by other bands, to avenge even if they came too late to save them. Here often the "trek" had no hope of help from others, no one to rely upon except themselves—and their God. The religious sentiment in the Boer has been often scoffed at; it certainly sometimes verges on cant, and naturally it is not equally sincere in all individuals; but upon the whole it is unfeigned and deep-seated; and if proof were wanted of that, no better need or could be adduced than these very "treks"; for no mortal man could have faced the certain, and still less the uncertain and

therefore doubly-dreaded, terrors of the wilderness without absolute reliance on the Lord of Hosts.

Mingled with the advantages which such descent and training brought, there were unfortunately other traits, less desirable by far, caused by the environments. The charge that the Boer in his constant intercourse with natives acquired a certain duplicity of policy is not quite unfounded. Instances could be adduced of the difference with which he regarded breaches of honesty in private and public life. That, however, is hardly a vice which can be imputed to the Boer only. Politicians elsewhere are taxed with having a laxer code of honour, and diplomacy has been described as the art of lying abroad for your country's good.

And then the Boer was ignorant, *pitifully* ignorant, in every sense of the word, since he certainly was so through no fault of his own; and ignorance here, as everywhere else, brought with it a train of minor vices—narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and distrust. These were clearly passing phases, however, and would be dispelled by the breath of education. Indeed, as the Boer's mental horizon widened, these failings fell from him as a cloak.

The Boer's thirst for education has already been referred to. Every child was taught at all events the rudiments of reading and writing at its mother's knee. More it could not get, for more she could not give. But whenever opportunity offered, the Boer endeavoured to provide his children with what he had himself missed. No chance of obtaining tuition was ever neglected; in every ward you would find a peripatetic teacher, whom four or five families had engaged, for a year or so, to keep a joint school. Often these men were lamentably inefficient, but they were welcomed because they were the best that could be got. Old soldiers, broken-down masons, discharged consumptive clerks, any one who claimed some acquaintance with the three R's found a living and a sphere of usefulness in this task. Often these teachers were not people to inspire respect; but nevertheless their services, such as they were, were keenly competed for; and when later, better opportunity came, with the means to avail themselves of it, it was eagerly grasped at. What President Burgers did for education has already been mentioned; and it can be safely asserted that the Transvaal Republic spent more *per capita* on education than any other country in the world.

The ground certainly was worth cultivating—perhaps because it had lain fallow for so long. The fact remains that the young Boers sent to Europe to study as doctor, minister, or advocate (and they were so sent whenever their people could at all afford it), held their own against the boys who had been trained from their earliest youth, and, numbers considered, conclusively beat them.

A prominent feature in the character of the old Boer was his unbounded hospitality. Every one was welcome to come and stay; that he should be "put up," his horse fed and attended to, was taken as a matter of course; and no money was ever accepted from him. Any one could have lived years going from farm to farm without spending a penny on board and lodging. That this state of things has altered is natural under the circumstances. No Boer could be expected to keep open house when the strangers came in their hundreds; but even yet South African hospitality is such that, once enjoyed, it is not easily forgotten.

Another striking feature was the generous manner in which the Boers helped their poorer neighbours, a quality in which they were excelled perhaps only by the Jews. Indeed, there

were no paupers in those days. Unfortunately that has much changed also.

That the Boer was and is a good husband and father has been always admitted by his bitterest enemies. Possibly this is largely due to his early marriage; in fact, to marry early, and marry often, appears to be a favourite maxim of his, since it is not at all unusual to find a couple who have each buried three or four husbands and wives. On the other hand, it is somewhat startling to find a happy wedded pair whose joint ages do not much exceed thirty years.[1]

The leading trait, however, in the Boer character, and of which he has given proof, which, to quote words which were never used, "staggered humanity," is his sturdy, his unconquerable love of liberty and independence, which he undoubtedly owes to his Dutch ancestry. Scion of a stock which fought for freedom for eighty years, he has proved himself not unworthy

[1] It was still more startling to the uninitiated stranger who happened to attend one of these Boer weddings, to hear the replies given by the young couple when questioned by the magistrate as to their ages: "'69," the beardless bridegroom would gruffly reply, while the blushing bride coyly echoed, "'72." These answers were not intended to give the years of their life, but that of their birth: they preferred to leave the responsibility of the actual calculation to the magistrate.

of his forbears. True, often this sentiment of liberty, amounting almost to a passion, has run into excess, and degenerated into a denial of all authority. It is instructive to notice, in the annals of the old Batavian rule at the Cape, how this trait was conspicuous even then. Much of the time of the old settlers seems to have been spent in conflicts with those in power. More than one Governor even was denounced to the Directors in Holland, charged with heinous offences, disobeyed. The settlers further inland often refused to recognize any control whatever, and scouted those who attempted to rule them. We have seen how their descendants, too, after they had founded their own Republics, soon repudiated the authority which they had themselves created, and that attempts to coerce them ended in open insurrection. But there are much later incidents of the like nature. Only a few months before the annexation, for instance, a very characteristic occurrence took place in Waterberg. The burghers, it should be stated, elected their own magistrates (Landdrosts), but the Government had the power to remove them, and to order the election of others. Well, in this district the Government, for reasons that appear to have been amply sufficient, dismissed the

Landdrost, and sent an old experienced officer as *locum tenens*, pending a fresh election. The late magistrate had been popular, however, and the Burghers refused to recognize his temporary successor. To prevent any possible misunderstanding as to their wishes, they one morning invaded the village in a body, took away all public records and official documents, locked the magistrate's office, and posted the keys to the Government at Pretoria.

It will be admitted that this sense of independence—often carried to extremes as it no doubt has been—is a most valuable trait in national character. It is in any case one which the Dutch largely share with the English. Both races are not easily governed; but there is the outweighing advantage that it is somewhat dangerous to misgovern them. That the Boers are amenable to just and judicious control[1] is not to be doubted; and that the English race is as ready to assert itself against an authority which it deems despotic is written on every page of its history in words which have

[1] President Brand, of undying memory, enjoyed the fullest confidence and loyalty of the Burghers of the Orange Free State, although during his term of office that Republic passed through trials so severe that it all but succumbed to them.

carried the aspiration for liberty into every corner of the globe.

To come back, however, to the theme of the Old Boer as contrasted with the New. Reference should be made to a fact which has produced an immense change in his habits and manner of life, namely, the practical extermination of larger game. In the brave days of old, the Boer spent half his life with the rifle in his hand. To the task of providing the meat supply of his family, and often of the servants who lived in kraals near his homestead, were added frequent shooting trips further inland in quest of giraffe, hippopotamus, and other large game, the hides of which, fashioned by himself into whips, sjamboks, and reims, were eagerly purchased by the storekeepers. Many Boers made still more extended journeys in chase of the lordly elephant; indeed, some villages, such as Zeerust and Marabastad, existed almost entirely on the trade in ivory. Many of the tusks were purchased from the natives, with whom indeed they were so common that Joao Albasini, the white chief of a large northern tribe, at one time had the stockade of his homestead constructed of them; but most of them were the spoils of the Boer and of some English hunters. Then there was the duty of protecting his herds against the attacks of

predatory animals. Small wonder, then, that the Boer became a marvellous marksman and tracker. One of his peculiarities was the manner in which he economized ammunition : no shot was fired unless there was a probability of its telling. That can be understood in the old days, when powder and lead were dear, and often unobtainable ; but even at the present time, when a shooting party sets out to seek blesbuck or springbuck, and each member of it takes care to provide himself with a liberal supply of cartridges, the Boer amongst them will take half a dozen only, and bring back as many head of game as any of the others !

Naturally there is a large crop of sporting stories in South Africa ; a few will follow, as they throw some light on local conditions.

Mr. D. S. Maré, magistrate of Zoutpansberg, was out lion-shooting with the late Barend Vorster, a mighty hunter before the Lord. A lioness had been wounded, driven out of cover, and stood at bay. The Landdrost jumped off his horse, fired and missed. It was now Vorster's turn, since there was not time for his friend to re-load. In dismounting he dropped his watch and stooped to pick it up. The lioness seemed about to charge, and Maré urged his friend to shoot. Vorster replied,

grumblingly, that the glass of the watch had been broken. "Never mind that now, the lioness is ready to spring," Maré replied. "Do you know," Vorster said, "I shall have to send the watch to Pretoria, and that it will cost me five shillings to get it repaired?" "Good heavens," the magistrate answered, "don't you see you have not a moment to lose?" "It's all very well for you to talk," Vorster replied. "It is not your watch that is broken!" At last, however, he slid it into his pocket, and with unerring aim gave the lioness the *coup de grâce*.

The most harrowing situation in which the Lord of Creation was ever put by the King of Beasts was surely that of a well-known hunter, Cornelis Botha, who with a friend and a small native boy were delayed in "Lion Veld" through an accident to their cart. They had anticipated passing the sphere of danger in broad daylight, and were unarmed; and when overtaken by darkness they were not a little anxious. Their fears were well founded. Two lions jumped from the bush which enclosed the track they followed, and killed the horse in the shafts. The cart had no cover; in fact it was little more than a box on wheels. Fortunately it was not overturned, and its occupants squatted down in it and made themselves as inconspicuous

as possible. The lions were soon at work on the killed horse, but from time to time one or the other of them would walk round the cart, sniffing and growling. The lioness seemed to be specially inquisitive. More than once she jumped up against the wheels, and her paw could be seen over the edge of the box in the dim moonlight : however, neither she nor her mate carried matters beyond that, and with daylight they disappeared in the bush, leaving their three prisoners to get to their destination on foot without any waste of time. What, however, imparted to the all but tragedy a certain comic element, of the grim kind, was the determined if silent struggle which had been going on in the cart all night. There was only room for two at the bottom. It was the object of the two white men, for obvious reasons, to keep the native boy on top ; he was equally determined to be at the bottom. Times out of number he would dive and wriggle, eel-like, below them, and as often would he be pushed, gently but firmly, to the surface. There was, Botha said, but little sleep for him that night !

President Kruger had in his day been one of the most successful of hunters, and had met with many adventures. It was, however, very difficult to get him to talk about them, even to his friends,

and with the stranger he was as adamant. A member of the "Corner House,"[1] now living in England, and for whom the President had some regard, was, however, more fortunate, and after much importunity extracted the following reminiscence. Paul Kruger had wounded an elephant, a cow with very fine tusks. Soon after firing he noticed that she had a calf with her, and somewhat regretted having commenced hostilities, as under such circumstances the ladies of that species are not to be trifled with. As anticipated, the elephant charged. The bush was so dense that the President could not leave the elephant-path in which he found himself, and, having no time to re-load, he ran down it at his best pace. Fortunately it was curved, and the elephant had some difficulty on keeping on his track. Presently it straightened out, and Kruger discovered to his consternation that it was already in possession of a lion, some twenty or thirty yards ahead. There was no time to deliberate: with the elephant the hunter had no chance; the lion *might* possibly give way; so Kruger kept on running. Whether it was due to this determined attitude, or perhaps to the fact that at that moment the elephant's

[1] The firm of Wernher, Beit & Co., the leading mine-owners on the Rand.

head appeared above the bushes, shrilly trumpeting—the lion turned tail and fled. Kruger had the advantage of a flying start, and passed the lion; the latter got up pace and forged ahead; a spurt by Kruger and he was leading; another trumpet by the elephant, and the lion was in front: Kruger said it was the best ding-dong race he had ever run in. All the time the elephant was rapidly gaining on both, and—

At this moment Dr. Leyds came in, to tell Mr. Kruger that he was expected in the Volksraad.

Mr. T. bitterly complains that notwithstanding all efforts he could never induce the President to finish his story.

Mr. Kruger was not without a sense of humour.

CHAPTER X.

THE BOER AT PLAY.

It will be seen from the foregoing that the Transvaal Boer's life was by no means a monotonous one. In addition to his shooting trips, his quarterly visits to the nearest village at Nachtmaal time, there was—at all events for many of them—an entire change of habitation and mode of living for some four or five months each year. The high-veld Boer each winter took his herds, who found no sustenance on the bare plateaux during that season, to the bushveld, which, while unhealthy for sheep and cattle during the summer, offered rich and wholesome pasturage in the colder months. During this time he and his people lived in waggons and tents. It was most interesting to meet one of these many periodical treks. Bedding, some furniture, household utensils, everything that could possibly be required, including coops of fowls, were piled on the large buck-waggons, while the tented waggons were crowded with the housewife and her numerous progeny. Even the cat had

not been forgotten. Around the waggons grazed the herds of cattle, sheep, and goats, tended by the natives from the home farm. While in the bushveld the farmer's time was almost exclusively spent in game-shooting and visiting, horse-racing and miniature Bisleys, for there was nothing else to do. The young people had a gay time indeed, for a bucksail[1] spread over ground cleared from grass provided each evening a good floor to the beautiful and magnificently ventilated hall, domed by the blue sky and lit by the stars, while the music of a fiddle or concertina was as much appreciated as the strains of the Blue Hungarian band in a London ball-room.

The chief festival, however, was at New Year. At that season every family prepared an unlimited supply of cakes and other good things, and vied with its neighbours in attracting the largest possible number of guests. It was the one time of the year in which even the staid patriarch unbent. Needless to say, the younger generation indulged in frolics and horseplay to an extent which could hardly have been capped at a cow-boys' festivity. Recklessness was often carried to excess. On one occasion at the end of a target-shooting, the three best shots—Botha, already referred to ;

[1] Large square of canvas, used for covering buck-waggons.

Roger Dyason; and a young field-cornet, De Beer, commonly known as "Red-hair"—held the target in turn, over their heads, under the arm, between their knees, while the other two fired at it and never missed the bull! A very comical incident (to all save one) occurred at the same occasion. The gathering was at Tweefontein, the finest farm in the Waterberg district. Fun was becoming fast and furious; too reckless indeed for the ladies of the party, who retired to the one-roomed schoolhouse to drink their coffee. A crack-brained fellow, Abraham de Wit, thought it a good joke to fire his gun—loaded, of course, with powder only—into the window of the school. The screeches of the women were loud enough to reach high heaven, and deep was the anger of the men. De Wit found it prudent to hide. He sauntered back when he thought things had blown over. In the meantime "Red-hair" had deposited a liberal cupful of powder in his old elephant-gun, and sidled up to De Wit. The latter smelt mischief, and bolted; Red-hair set out in chase. Abraham was in great agony. He could hear the swift feet gaining on him; he knew he was lost. Nearer and nearer came his doom till at last he instinctively felt the muzzle of his pursuer's gun hovering over his coat-tails. "Don't shoot, Red-hair!" he cried

out in mortal terror, "for heaven's sake, don't shoot—it's a borrowed pair of trousers!" The appeal proved in vain. Bang! went the shot, with most painful effects on the recipient, and absolutely disastrous results to the loaned pants.

"Red-hair's" name recalls the fact that the Boers were often better known by their nicknames than by their own proper appellations. The large families, generally living near the parent stem, made it necessary that some distinguishing name should be attached to the different individuals. In the large tribe of Engelbrecht (mostly christened "Adriaan"), for instance, the plainest was known as Mooi Adriaan (handsome Adrian), while another, also ill-favoured by nature, was called Adrian Floweret; a third, long and slim, was Adrian Penholder; a fourth, who had had an adventure with a leopard, Adrian Tiger. Two Klaas Nels were distinguished from each other as Klaas Crow and Klaas Vulture, the latter cognomen being due to the fact that a large cliff near his house was the abode of those useful but unattractive birds. As a last instance, Red-hair's uncle was always addressed and spoken of as "Puregift" (pure poison), his farm being infested at certain seasons with a poisonous tulip-like plant.

On the subject of names, a hint might here be given to Czars, Austrian doctors, and others in search of a formula which will ensure the birth of a son and an heir. When, in a Boer's family, a succession of girls make their appearance, an unfailing panacea is resorted to. They call the latest arrival by a boy's name, with the inevitable result that the next little stranger belongs to the sterner sex. It seems quite simple when you know it.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GATHERING OF THE STORM.

Shepstone's administration was by no means shaping well. To begin with, it had re-opened the old quarrel with Sekukuni, with whom the Republic had patched up a peace; and, though the operations were finally successful, the war did not make for prosperity. A much more serious business, however, was the Zulu War. The English Government discovered—now the Transvaal was annexed—that after all the Boers were not altogether in the wrong. A Commission was appointed by the British authorities to investigate the matter. Its report was largely in favour of the Zulus, but its finding did not meet with the approval of either Sir Theophilus Shepstone himself or of Sir Bartle Frere, who had become High Commissioner of South Africa about the time of the annexation. The latter considered it one-sided and unfair to the Boers.[1] And in confirming

[1] Sir Bartle Frere wrote to Sir Garnet Wolseley on

it, as he found himself compelled to do, he introduced a stipulation that the Boers should either be compensated for, or should be allowed to retain, the seventy-five farms they occupied in the disputed territory. Moreover, it appeared that the Natal authorities had for years acted in a way which had created in the minds of the Zulus the conviction that they were to look upon the Boers as their natural foes.[1] This policy had now to be entirely reversed, and the Zulus failed to understand this complete *volte face*. Further causes for friction accumulated, and finally led to Isandhlawana, Rorke's Drift, Zhlobane, and Ulundi, in which last battle the Zulu host was finally crushed.

The Boers were much blamed for refusing to take part in this struggle, which really concerned them as much as it did the English frontiermen,

September 15th, 1879: "As to the Boundary award, you are quite right. It was an unjust verdict, but it came from a jury chosen by ourselves, though not of my own selection, and I did not see my way to directing a fresh trial. Had I known then as much as I do now of its history, I would not even under such circumstances have given effect to it."

[1] Sir Bartle Frere wrote to Mr. R. W. Herbert on January 12th, 1879, as follows:—"I have been shocked to find how very close to the wind the predecessors of the present Government here have sailed in supporting the Zulus against Boer aggression."

since they were equally exposed to attack by the native hordes. Moreover, as stated, the Zulus were looked upon as their hereditary enemies. In fact, one of the reasons advanced by Shepstone for the annexation was that it was necessary in order to protect the Boers against Cetewayo, whose young braves were panting to wash their spears in the blood of the men who had defeated Dingaan. The Boers, however, never anticipated grave danger from that quarter. They much preferred fighting the Zulus, however numerous, who came out and attacked in the open, where the rifle could assert its superiority, to skirmishing with the Maketis, who hid behind schans and stone, from whence at any moment a pot-leg fired from an old blunderbuss might lay low any one who exposed himself. Besides, the Zulus had the Swazis on their flank, and these were the Boer's firm allies. Less in number than the Zulus, they were yet quite prepared to meet them, and they were in those days as warlike and virile a race as the former. Indeed it is sad to record how the Swazis have fallen! Bribed by conscienceless concession-hunters and other adventurers who plied him with drink, their "king" set an example which, unfortunately, his subjects were not slow to follow, and to-day they are but a shadow of their former

selves, degenerated to an extent which happily is unmatched by any other native tribe in South Africa.[1]

Anyhow, the Boers looked upon the Zulu War as not being their quarrel; and little chivalrous as such an attitude may appear, it was not unnatural under the circumstances. Their abstention was largely redeemed by the aid given to the British force by a small band of Burghers, few in numbers, but of the utmost assistance as guides, since they knew every inch of the country. They were led by Piet Uys, who fell at Zhlobane.

Meanwhile the Boers were getting more sullen and discontented day by day. The promises made in the annexation proclamation were not kept, or kept to a small extent only. However, while Sir Theophilus remained in charge, he managed to avoid any open breach with them. As we have seen, deputations were sent to England to claim back their independence; but by many Boers even that, or any other attempt to regain it, was looked upon as hopeless; while British politicians regarded

[1] The concessions which were extracted from the Swazi kings, and which conferred the monopoly of every imaginable article, were finally capped by a "concession of concessions," the holder of which was entitled to the first option of any other concession which might in future be applied for.

these missions as useful opportunities to the malcontents for letting off steam.

Then, in an evil hour to the British Government, it recalled Shepstone and replaced him by Colonel Lanyon. The previous career of the last-named gentleman may be summed up in one sentence. He had been Colonel of a West Indian Regiment, and, for a brief time, Lieutenant-Governor of the Kimberley Diamond-fields, where he had successfully carried through some operations against a native tribe. He had not a single quality fitting him for his new task. He did not speak a word of the language of the Boers, did not understand them or their ways, and had nothing in common with them by which he might have appealed to their sympathies, or win their confidence. Nor did he seem over anxious to obtain these. His rule was clearly intended to be that of the sword. Few Boers knew him or ever met him, beyond those in Pretoria. The very nickname the Burghers bestowed upon him—"Lang Jan"(Long John)—showed that they did not even know him by sight, for he was not a tall man.

The Government was badly served too by those who advised it as to local views and sentiment. Pretoria, as has been shown, had got out of touch with the veld. Those who "knew their Boer" and remembered his failure at Sekukuni, refused to

believe that he would dare to throw down the gauntlet to the mighty British Empire. The Boer—it was argued—had deteriorated; he was not what his father or grandfather, the old Voortrekkers, were; why, since the game had got scarcer, he had even forgotten how to shoot!

Meanwhile, the movement was gathering strength in the Back Veld. Meetings in wards ended in larger district gatherings. Secret at first—they became more and more undisguised, until at last they culminated in a mass meeting at Ferguson's farm, halfway between Pretoria and Heidelberg.

The Boers were here met by Sir Bartle Frere. No sooner had he heard the leaders and seen the demeanour of those who followed them, than he realized the gravity of the situation. Indeed, if he had remained at the helm, he might perchance, by timely concessions, by carrying into effect Shepstone's promises, and by sympathetic treatment, have averted or at all events postponed the worst.[1] But he was not to have the oppor-

[1] The following is an extract from a Despatch of Sir Bartle Frere to Sir M. Hicks-Beach, dated April 14th, 1879:—

"I have . . . . been shown the stubbornness of a determination to be content with nothing else (retrocession)

tunity. He was recalled in August, 1880, and Lanyon was left in untrammelled charge.

From that moment there was no hope of a peaceful solution. The final breach between Boer and British Government was inevitable—it was merely a question of sooner or later; but its advent was hastened by that most prosaic and matter-of-fact mortal, the tax-gatherer.

Shepstone had wisely refrained from pressing

for which I was not prepared by the general testimony of the officials who had been longer in the country, and who professed to believe that the opposition of the Boers was mere bluster, and that they had not the courage of their professed opinions. . . . I feel assured that the majority of the Committee felt very deeply what they believed to be a great national wrong."

Subsequent to the interview, Mr. Kruger addressed Sir Bartle Frere as follows:—

"The people and the Committee have all conceived great respect for your Excellency, because your Excellency is the first high official of Her Majesty who has laid bare the whole truth; and that esteem will not easily be lost, whatever men may say. . . . "

Before leaving Pretoria (May, 1879) Sir Bartle Frere had amongst other minor matters arranged the following steps:—(1) The creation of an Executive Council with some Boers in it; (2) The creation of a temporary Legislature which was "to prepare the way for a representative Volksraad"; (3) Administrative reforms; (4) The completion of the Delagoa Bay Railway. These measures were carried out, however, in a half-hearted manner, and to a limited extent only.

for payment of what was due to Cæsar; indeed, as we have seen, he had remitted the most burdensome imposition—the War Tax—altogether. But now the Home Government insisted that the Transvaal should put its house in order. Ends could not be made to meet unless taxes came in better. The Sekukuni War had cost much money. There appeared to be a lot of arrears; instructions arrived to get them in, and the collector was set to work.

This brought matters to an issue. Advertisements had already appeared in the Dutch papers calling upon the Burghers to refuse taxes to a Government not recognized by them.

In November the waggon of a Boer, Piet Bezuidenhout, was distrained for taxes, and about to be sold by the sheriff in Potchefstroom, when a body of farmers rode into the town, stopped the sale, and took the waggon away with them.

A few weeks later, on December 16th, 1880, the "Volksvergadering" (national meeting) at Paarde Kraal, after four or five days' discussion, resolved to again proclaim the Republic. The old Volksraad was called together, and a provisional government was formed, called the Driemanschap (Triumvirate) consisting of Kruger, P. J. Joubert, and ex-President Pretorius. Soon after a small commando

entered Heidelberg, forcibly took possession of a press there, and printed the first copies of their Declaration of Independence.

The die was cast.

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CHAPTER XII.

THE WAR OF INDEPENDENCE.

It is not within the scope of this volume to give a detailed, or, indeed, any history of the 1880-1881 war. Besides, its leading events have been so often recorded that they require no further reference. They may be summed up shortly as follows :—In the course of hostilities extending over some three months, the Boers were the victors in every larger engagement; on the other hand, they failed in capturing a single one of the different positions held by the British troops in the Transvaal. Determined attempts were made by them to take more than one of them, such as Potchefstroom, Rustenburg, and Lydenburg, but in each case they were foiled. Potchefstroom, it is true, surrendered, but that was due to a misunderstanding—or worse—and at close of hostilities it was solemnly re-occupied by the English before the country was handed back to the Boer.

The position of Pretoria was peculiar, and dif-

fered entirely from that of the other towns invested. The history of its siege has still to be written. It should make an interesting volume. For three months the town was surrounded by the Boers, though not besieged in the true sense of the word. Four posts, from six to eight miles distant from the town, were occupied by them (Redhouse Kraal, Crocodile River, Zwartkopjes, Wonderboomspoort), with smaller outposts in between. These held perhaps some 800 to 1,500 men, in varying numbers; altogether too little for any attack on Pretoria, but quite sufficient to cut it off from communication with the rest of the country; for only at rare intervals did messengers succeed in breaking through the cordon, so that the authorities were practically without any intelligence as to what was going on elsewhere.

The first—and almost the last—news received was that of the Bronkhorstspruit disaster. Much vituperation has been indulged in over this encounter, and the Boers have been charged with every military crime in connection with it. One single fact is a complete answer to all these accusations. Colonel Anstruther, the officer in command of the British forces, while dying, shook hands with Commandant Joubert, the Boer leader, and thanked him for his courtesy and consideration.

As soon as the military authorities realized the danger, they used every endeavour to put Pretoria in a state of defence. There was a strong garrison, with ample supply of ammunition and food, so that no doubt was fostered but that the place could hold its own until the arrival of the relieving forces. The town itself, straggling, tactically vulnerable from a dozen quarters, was abandoned, and every man, woman, and child ordered into the camp. Here large barracks had been erected. The troops were turned out, and the Pretorian families installed in them. Soldiers and civilians for whom no room could be found were lodged under canvas. The camp was then fortified by the erection of low walls and ditches, and barbed wire entanglements; several blockhouses were also constructed.

It appeared at once that all Pretoria, or very nearly all of it, declared itself on the side of England, and was prepared to actively assist in the defence of the town. In several ways this was quite explicable; Pretoria's prosperity was largely dependent upon the maintenance of the English Government; and the fact that the women and children were sent to the camp made it all but a duty on the part of the men to help to defend them. Still, there were many people intimately

connected with the Boers, relations, friends, old officials of the Republic, people of Dutch descent themselves, whose allegiance to England might have been doubted. Yet they all voluntered to serve under the British flag.

It has already been explained how it came about that Pretoria had drifted away from the Dutch, and had been Anglicized. Still, the Boers deeply resented this general defection.

Only a few Hollander families held out; these were treated virtually as prisoners.

The volunteers were divided into several bodies, and the best shots and horsemen were mounted. The *corps d'élite* undoubtedly was the Pretoria Carbineers (D'Arcy's Horse). It lost in a hundred days nearly a third of its number, including three successive C.O.'s (Captain D'Arcy, wounded; Captain Sanctuary, R.N., died of wounds; Captain W. A. B. Anderson, wounded). Nourse's Horse, under Captain Nourse and Captain (now Colonel Sir) Aubrey Woolls-Sampson, also saw a lot of service and did valuable work.

As a next step, all foodstuffs in town were commandeered, and everybody put on rations. The distribution of these was entrusted to a department in charge of no less a personage than his Lordship the Chief Justice.

And then we sat down and waited for relief, or, at all events, for news of its approach. We were destined to wait longer than we anticipated.

Obviously it was our duty to do something to meet the relieving force, when it came, and in the meantime to do all that was possible to keep the Boers busy, so as to prevent some of their numbers being sent for service elsewhere. Patrols went out, therefore, to locate the enemy, and when we had found out his lairs we attempted to unearth him. This proved to be no easy task. The simple Dutch farmers had chosen their positions well. Only one post, that at Zwartkopjes, proved really vulnerable. We attacked early one morning. Having shelled the rock-piled hillock near which the small Boer force was encamped, it was stormed with great gallantry—Sampson especially distinguishing himself—and taken. The result was the capture of about a dozen prisoners, including brave Commandant Hans Botha, who was wounded in no less than five places before he would surrender, and of three or four ox-waggons, which we could not remove, and therefore blew up with dynamite. And after that, back to Pretoria, with a dozen or so dead and wounded sent on ahead. We ourselves did not get home without some more excitement. Our

shelling had attracted the Boers from their other positions, and they came up just in time to escort us back. No doubt we could have made them desist at any time had we turned, but there was no object in spending the rest of the day in long-distance skirmishing.

Less successful were our two attacks in Red-house Kraal. In both we lost a lot of men, and did nothing beyond keeping the enemy alive to the fact that we would give trouble where we could.

A most ludicrous situation occurred in our attack on the Crocodile River Laager. The river is connected with Pretoria by a long and almost unbroken ridge, which was cleared by Nourse's Corps with great gallantry. The British infantry also behaved splendidly, and the Boer Commandant, Henning Pretorius, having been wounded, his men were soon in full flight, abandoning their laager at the foot of the hill, of which we had gained possession. At this moment orders were given to retreat. Some bodies of the enemy had been seen at a distance, and the General thought it was time for us to go home; the result being that the Boer laager was left in peaceful solitude, the British force retreating from it in one direction, and the Boers

in the other. When the latter saw they were not followed, they turned round and honoured us by a long distance *feu-de-joie* all the way back.

And so the days dragged on. Surely relief must come soon, we argued; and in the meantime we did our best to keep up our spirits, and those of the womenfolk. Concerts, theatricals, even occasional dances, brightened up the monotony; and if you wanted any excitement you had only to go down town (for once reminding one of the old Sleepy Hollow of ten years ago—since it was inhabited only by some stray cat); for the chances were that the sound of the alarm signal would soon send the venturesome intruder scurrying back to camp.

Naturally a time like this, spent under circumstances so widely different from our ordinary occupations, produced many amusing incidents, which went the round of the camp. How A. had tried all he could to get himself shot, as the only possible solution of his simultaneous engagement to two ladies who had been unable to resist the glamour of his martial achievements. How B., in charge of the party cutting hay for the mules, had, when reporting that he had been attacked by the Boers, and had lost the mowing machine, triumphantly added, "But I first

spiked it, sir!" producing a wheel which he had brought with him. And how C., a lover of the fleshpots, had drawn huge rations for his large family for weeks, until it was discovered that he had adopted a lot of children—all babes in arms—for the purpose.

Two months had passed—three months—no news yet! Then at last it came, as a bolt from the blue.

CHAPTER XIII.

RETROCESSION.

News indeed! Laing's Nek, Ingogo, Majuba; and then, to crown all, came the Peace! And such a Peace!

The country was to be given back to the Boers. That was what we expected, when we heard all that had occurred. But what of us, who had trusted England's promises? We had been told, from the lips of her (then) only General, that as long as the rivers ran and the sun shone the Transvaal would remain British. We had risked all to stand by England; how would England stand by us? What means would be used to protect us, to guard our interests?

The reply was clear, if somewhat blunt. It read, "None!"

Those amongst us who had come during the period of annexation could register themselves as British subjects, and would be protected by the British flag; but we others who had been

Republicans before—who had therefore the more reason to dread Boer retaliation—the more need of safeguards—well, we were told that we had become Dutch again, and would have to make the best of it; and we were advised to make terms with our recent enemies, our new masters.

With much apprehension and a stricken conscience did Pretoria await what action the Boers would take.

It was not what we had feared, and indeed deserved.

The Boers treated us with a magnanimity, a generosity which is unparalleled in history. Apart from the ebullitions of some irresponsible youngsters, hardly a single word of reproach was addressed to us; no one suffered in mind, body, or estate. There was no boycotting of the old shopkeepers, who, from the Boer standpoint, might well have been looked upon as renegades; the professional men amongst us—the doctors and solicitors—received as much work as did their Hollander *confrères*. Many of the old officials, who had served the English Government, were re-installed, and, strongest proof of all, within a brief eight or ten years four of those who had borne arms against the Republic in

the "war of liberty"[1] had become members of its Volksraad, small as it was in number, and exercised a not inconsiderable influence in it.

Is it to be wondered at that when, twenty years later, the question of Briton against Boer once more arose, those who had so been forgiven threw in their lot, without doubt or hesitation, and almost to a man, with the Republic?

The result of this instance of Boer generosity, of confidence freely given, should read a lesson to statesmen of to-day, who hesitate whether they shall trust or coerce.

Would that the Boers themselves had always adopted the same line of action in later times!

Sir Henry De Villiers, the Chief Justice of the Cape Colony, and President Brand, who were largely instrumental in bringing about the Peace, and settling its terms, were much blamed at the time for omitting to provide for what was clearly England's duty; but they were right after all. They knew the Boer.

Nevertheless, Pretoria was not happy. Prosperity had departed from its doors. The banks, established during the interregnum, initiated a policy of scuttle and run; they called

[1] R. K. Loveday, Frank Watkins, E. P. A. Meintjes, and the writer.

in all outstandings, and ruthlessly enforced their claims. This was followed by the withdrawal of much other capital invested there. The value of property depreciated to an alarming extent. The large sums spent by the British garrison and the well-paid officials no longer found their way into the till of the shopkeeper. The Transvaal Government was soon on the verge of bankruptcy. At one time it found itself compelled to borrow a few thousand pounds on most onerous conditions from a local merchant, who reaped a rich profit, direct and indirect, from the loan. The period of 1881-1885 was one of lean years in the land. Towards the end, however, matters began to improve. The Barberton gold-fields, headed by the Sheba mine (then believed to be the richest in the world), attracted both capital and a number of immigrants, again chiefly from Natal. Barberton became an important centre, and in its prosperity the Republic naturally shared. This, however, was only the dawn of a new era. Wealth such as no Boer had ever dreamt of was to fall in golden showers upon the land. Cities such as he had never seen were about to spring up, as if by magic, upon the bare veld.

CHAPTER XIV.

GOLD ON THE WITWATERSRAND.

The first discovery of the precious metal in the neighbourhood of the Rand was made by Mr. H. W. Struben. He found on one of his farms some ore of marvellous richness, running hundreds of ounces to the ton; but when he had erected a small battery and began to develop the lode, it proved to be only a "blow," and was soon abandoned. Attention had, however, been drawn to the district, and prospecting took place in every direction, with the result that the conglomerate now known as Banket (from its resemblance to almond rock, of which sweetstuff "Banket" is the Dutch name) was found to be gold-bearing and of great value. The title of first discoverer is claimed by more than one person; probably Mr. Fred Struben has the best right to it.

The news of this discovery caused immense sensation. The public, whose appetite had been whetted by the Barberton boom and the fortunes made there, flocked to the spot at first in

their hundreds, then in thousands. It soon appeared that the deposit—for it is no true lode —extended over a vast area. Many reefs were found which proved to be will-of-the-wisps; but the main reef itself was traced through several farms. It was at that time considered to have no considerable depth, and all the first workings were open cuttings. Indeed, even years later, one of the leading mining magnates, Mr. J. B. Robinson, stoutly maintained, in meetings and newspaper correspondence, that the so-called "deep levels" had no value whatever, as the reef could not possibly run to a lower depth than five or six hundred feet. Fortunately for himself, he did not long adhere to these views. Of course he had been misled by his experts; indeed, it is wonderful how often the gentlemen with theoretical knowledge—and sometimes those with practical experience too—proved to be utterly at fault in South Africa, both as to diamonds and gold. On the other hand, when they have been right their views have often been scouted or misapplied. There is one case very much to the point. The question is often asked why Mr. Rhodes, already then a rich man and of boundless energy and enterprise, did not secure a larger slice of the Rand; why his interests were so much less

valuable than those of the Ecksteins, Barnatos, and Robinson. The answer is that he believed in his expert, and was misled by the latter's report, although such report was perfectly correct. This sounds Irish, but the explanation is simple. Rhodes brought Mr. Gardner Williams—afterwards general manager of De Beer's and one of the ablest and shrewdest mining engineers South Africa has known—to look at the Rand. Williams investigated and reported the Banket as a "ten pennyweight proposition." This was a tremendous drop from the ounces to the tons which were then won from the Wemmer and Ferreira mines, and Rhodes decided not to "plunge," though through his firm he secured large interests nevertheless. As we now know, Gardner Williams was right; only Rhodes could not anticipate that a ten pennyweight average would produce a profit of over four million pounds sterling a year—with more to come!

But this is a digression.

For months the first arrivals on the new fields lived in tents or waggons, and it was quite an event when the first hut with thatch roof was erected on Natal Spruit.[1] Soon after several

[1] "Rose Cottage," built by its owner, Mr. Julius Jeppe. Dimensions 12′ by 10′—all told.

farms were proclaimed as public diggings; claims were pegged out till the whole country looked like the back of a hedgehog; and the site of Johannesburg was established by the Government as a township.

A period of marvellous bustle and activity then ensued. Houses, mostly of wattle-and-daub or corrugated iron, sprang up from the ground like mushrooms. Many tales are told of this rapid building development, of which the following is probably the most graphic.

A farmer had come up from the Cape with his waggon and oxen, for the latter of which he was offered so tempting a price that he not only sold them on the spot, but decided to go back and fetch up the rest of his spans in order to dispose of them at the same satisfactory figure. In the meantime he had no use for his waggon and so took it to Morkel, the first auctioneer who established himself on the Rand. Morkel himself was out; the farmer could not wait, so he left the waggon on the open veld behind the auctioneer's office. He told a clerk of it, who promptly forgot all about it. When the owner returned to Johannesburg, six weeks later, he found his forgotten waggon had been built in; that is, the veld had been filled up with houses closely

packed together, and separated by such narrow lanes only, that the waggon had to be taken to pieces before it could be removed.

But Johannesburg the Wonderful should have a chapter to itself.

CHAPTER XV.

THE GOLDEN CITY.

Those who marvel at Johannesburg, who stand amazed at the energy and enterprise which called up a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants, equipped with all the advantages of modern civilization, where ten or twelve years previously there had been only the lonely veld, are often not aware that the wonder is even greater than it appears at first sight. For not one but three Johannesburgs were built up in that time. In some of the streets the strata of the three periods can still be detected. First came the primary—the corrugated iron stage; next, the age of one or two storied brick buildings; finally, these were again demolished to make room for edifices of which any city might well be proud.

And let it be remembered that all and everything had to be done, and had to be done at once. Everything that goes to make a city—all that else-

where is produced by the continuous work of many generations, was here planned and perfected in less than a decade. Miles upon miles of streets, to a total not far short of a hundred, had to be constructed; water, gas, electric light, and sanitation provided, churches and hospitals erected, parks and recreation grounds laid out, tramways and bridges built. And in all these Johannesburg may challenge comparison with many a larger town.

Let us remember, too, that those who made Johannesburg what it is, built up an industry at the same time such as can be found nowhere else in the world. Forty miles of reef had to be developed, thousands of stamps for crushing the ore imported, and the extraction of the precious metal brought to a state of perfection hitherto unknown. Labour, white and black, to the number of some eighty thousand men, had to be organized; quarters found for them at the mines; water to be preserved in huge dams to eke out the scanty volume of the creeks. And all these tremendous tasks were performed simultaneously.

It will be readily conceded that the people who built Johannesburg and made the Rand must have possessed exceptional qualities. Plucky, determined, ready to face any difficulty, to solve

any problem, they were the personification of well-directed and indomitable enterprise.

They possessed other qualities besides which call for admiration. Public spirited to the highest degree, always ready to furnish the means for any project which would benefit or embellish the town, they responded readily to the constant calls which were made on their purses, and, what was of more consequence, their time. A more open-handed, more generous crowd could not be found in any other quarter of the globe. To give one instance only: when the terrible disaster took place at Braamfontein—when the explosion of a train-load of dynamite sent many scores of people—chiefly Dutch and of the poorer classes—to instant death, and left many hundreds ruined and homeless, some fifty thousand pounds were collected in Johannesburg *in one morning* for the relief of the sufferers.

Another attribute which distinguished the Johannesburger was his devotion to sport. Hard as he worked and made others work, he never allowed Jack to become a dull boy. The town made itself the headquarters of sport in South Africa. In slack times, at periods of depression, or when a boom gladdened the heart of the speculator (and who did not speculate in Johannesburg?)

horse-racing, cricket and football matches, tennis and polo tournaments, were supported as they are in no other community of the same population.

It is due to this devotion to manly sports and to the generous assistance of men like Abe Bailey and David Pullinger (to name only two out of many who deserve to be chronicled) that Johannesburg can boast of the Wanderers' Park, as fine a recreation ground as any south of the line, and that cricket and football in South Africa have made such progress that it can now pit itself against the strength of England with fair hopes of success.

Truly, to have been one of the pioneers of this city of marvels is something to look back upon with satisfaction and pride !

CHAPTER XVI.

THE NEW-COMER AND THE GOVERNMENT.

The relations between the Boer Government and the immigrants who now began to stream to the Rand from all sides were as satisfactory as could be desired. The stranger was welcomed with open arms, and had no cause to quarrel with conditions as he found them. The Transvaal gold law was as fair and liberal as that of any country, and contrasted most favourably with the mining code of Rhodesia, the Cape Colony, and other British possessions. Indeed, where it has been changed at all since the last annexation, it has been altered so as to increase the burdens put upon the mines.

Direct taxation was of the most modest description—a poll tax of 10*s.* a year on each adult male. The indirect taxation by way of import dues was more onerous, but the duties were not heavier than those of the Cape Colony or Natal.

The control of mining matters proper was entrusted in the first instance to a Diggers' Com-

mittee,[1] the interests of the town to a municipal body, the Sanitary Board, with restricted and Government-controlled authority, to which, however, no exception was taken. Moreover, the new-comer was too busy and prosperous to worry himself about matters political.

The Government was also very fortunate in the choice of its officials on the Rand. The Field Cornet, Jan Meyer, who controlled the "Camp" in its earliest days, got on exceedingly well with the first arrivals, and he was replaced, as matters developed, by a magistrate, Captain Von Brandis (an officer of the old German Legion), who was the most popular man on the fields. By no means of brilliant parts, he had a wonderful knack of dealing with men, especially with a crowd. Even in the latter evil days when troubles came thick and fast, he quelled several incipient riots, which, but for him, would have ended in serious collisions with the police, in a manner all his own. Mounting some convenient cart, waggon, or stoep,[2] he would harangue the sullen crowd as follows:—"Now, you men, don't be fools! I know what you want, and we have got to do our best about it

[1] Until a special Mining Department was organized.

[2] Heightened pathway in front of buildings.

—you and I. What I'll do is, I'll sit down and write to the Government—and you've got to do your part too—you've got to go home and enjoy your dinner. Off you go." And they went.

The first Mining Commissioner, Elof, was liked too, and did much to smooth matters and get the complicated question of title to surface and water arranged to the satisfaction of the mines. The Police Magistrate (a youngster of only twenty-one years, but brainy and tactful), and, in fact, all other officials were also in great favour.

The Pretoria Government treated the town and mines most generously in many ways. It gave the site for the magnificent grounds of the Wanderers' Club; it handed over to the Johannesburg Hospital certain revenues which amounted at one time to £40,000 per annum, and endowed other hospitals in a similar way. It voted £20,000 a year towards the water supply of the town, and generally recognized that the Rand was entitled to a generous share of the golden stream which was pouring into the public Treasury, as a consequence of its prosperity. Indeed, at no time can it be said that the Boer treated the newcomer, in the matter of finances, with a niggard hand.

The Government did still more, however, in

dealing with a matter of vital importance to Johannesburg—namely, railway communication with the ports.

From the first days after the 1881 Retrocession the Boer had firmly resolved to realise the dream of President Burgers, and connect the Republic by rail with Portuguese Delagoa Bay. The magnificent harbour of Lorenço Marques is undoubtedly the natural port of the Transvaal, as the merest glance at the map of South Africa will show. But Kruger had in addition strong views as to the advantages of a neutral port. In that way alone could he compel the coast colonies, the Cape and Natal, to forego or reduce the heavy transit duties which they levied on all imports into the Republic. Great sacrifices were therefore made to raise the necessary money, and it was again found in Holland. As has already been mentioned, President Burgers obtained only a partial success; but the European Dutch had since noted with pride the struggles of their distant cousins in the war of liberty, crowned as it was by success, and opened their purses.

The route from Lorenço Marques was a very difficult and unhealthy one. Much money was also wasted, and when completed the line cost

an immense sum, something like £15,000 a mile. For every penny of it—capital and interest—the Republic was directly responsible.

The coast colonies had naturally noted the approaching completion of this railway with much apprehension. It would doubtlessly seriously, if not fatally, affect their trade with the Transvaal, and would reduce the large profits resulting from the traffic on their own lines, which had been extended up to the Transvaal border.

Sir James Sivewright, Commissioner of Public Works at the Cape, therefore went to Pretoria on what was probably the most important mission of his life—to induce the Boer Government to construct a line which was to connect with the Cape trains, and to obtain for the "Old Colony" a fair share of the Transvaal trade and traffic.

It may easily be discerned how difficult Sivewright's task was. He intended to ask that the Republic should forego a large share of the proceeds of the "Portuguese" line, for which it had made such sacrifices and assumed such responsibilities, and content itself as to such share with the profit on the fifty or sixty miles—the distance for which this connecting line would run in the Transvaal.

Fortunately for the Cape, Sivewright was a man equal to the task. Shrewd, genial, plausible in the highest degree—a *persona grata* with Kruger—he succeeded in obtaining the connection, and a third of the traffic. Doubtlessly he was much assisted by the clamour which had arisen at the Rand for an alternative route to the sea, with all its advantages of trade and competition.

The Rand had therefore every reason to be grateful to the Boer. The Government, however, went still further, and, to the unbounded satisfaction of Johannesburg, sanctioned a third line to connect the Transvaal with Natal. This was built by the Natal Government, which secured a similar third of the joint trade, leaving one-third only for the Delagoa Bay line.

Another factor which promoted a good understanding was that the control of the mining interests was largely in the hands of the Chamber of Mines, whose Chairman, the late Herman Eckstein (a man of calm and moderate disposition, and possessed of great tact and common sense), enjoyed the confidence of the President, and assisted in removing all possible causes of friction.

For some years, therefore, the best relations prevailed between Rand and Government; they lived together as happily as any young married couple—before their first quarrel.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RIFT IN THE LUTE.

It must be conceded that when the first quarrel —so fatal in its results—came, the fault of it lay undoubtedly and entirely with the Boer Government.

The manner of its happening was as follows:—

The Burgher of the Republic had been ready, even eager, to welcome the stranger from afar, who turned his bare veld into a Tom Tiddler's ground, who had doubled the value of all property, created magnificent markets, and changed the poverty of the Republic into undreamed-of wealth. Such people were, of course, to be encouraged, their interests fostered, their wishes regarded. There was but one thing which was to be denied to them—they were not to be admitted to any share of the government of the country. On that point the Boer [1] was firmly and finally determined.

[1] The term "Boer" in this chapter refers to the Conservative Party amongst the Burghers which included the Government and the majority of the Volksraad.

President Kruger's attitude on this subject was a unique one, and it has never been quite understood by what process of reasoning he arrived at it. When the question of the Franchise was first mooted, and its danger to the Republic realized, and indeed ever afterwards, the President propounded the doctrine that "we were safe in refusing as long as we adhered to the Law!" How such dogmatic reference to laws which could at the country's will be changed at any given moment, could have the effect of satisfying the political aspirations of the Uitlander (that hateful word, now to be heard for the first time!), Mr. Kruger did not explain.

The Law, however, was well enough in its way. The conditions upon which full citizenship could be obtained[1] were by no means unreasonable. They were five years' residence with a property qualification which included every person who was not an absolute pauper.

Of old the Republic had never been afraid to admit the stranger within its gate, and take him to its bosom. In those days he came in small numbers, and was easily assimilated. Now, however, the immigrants appeared in batches, in hundreds, in thousands, and apparently they came to stay; while the time in which they

[1] Since 1882.

could claim full rights was coming nearer and nearer. "The Law" was no longer a solace to the President's troubled soul.

What was easier, however, than to find a remedy? It was so simple: Alter the Law, then adhere to it again!

This nostrum was indeed administered in successive doses. Time after time[1] the Franchise was tinkered with, the term of residence extended, onerous conditions, obstacles, pitfalls introduced, until at last it became so complex that one thing was certain only, namely, that the earliest period of residence at the end of which full rights could possibly be obtained was fourteen years. In reality even then no man could be quite sure of his status—both by reason of the complex and obscure wording of the acts, and because by that time the term of probation might well have been further prolonged into the dim future.

As a sop of consolation a Second Chamber was created, in which the new-comer, after five years, could be represented together with the "full Burgher." This Second Chamber had, however, only very restricted powers, which were practically confined to matters affecting the mines and commerce. It had no power of initiation, no right to

[1] 1890, 1893, 1894.

vote supplies; and its enactments were subject to confirmation of the First Volksraad. And even in this body the Uitlander was most inadequately represented. Small wonder, then, that it was looked upon as a delusion and a snare, though within its limited scope it did good work.

This tortuous policy proved to be a political blunder of the first magnitude.

The inhabitants of the Rand at that time may be divided into two categories. There were the Britishers, who formed the majority. Of these—as will be shown later on—very few, if indeed any, would have accepted the Franchise. The rest of the population had been gathered together from all corners of the earth, belonged to all nationalities, and represented every shade of political opinion. By far the most of them were anxious to become Transvaalers, and their accession to the ranks of the Burghers would therefore have been a source of strength and not one of danger to the Republic.

There were amongst them many Americans, and some French—as staunch Republicans as any Burgher in the land; Hollanders and Germans, who openly preferred the Boer's to any other rule; a very large contingent of Cape Dutch—bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh—prepared gladly to throw in their lot with the Republic. Worse still,

there were many Burghers from the Free State, brothers in peace and war, not a few of whom had fought shoulder to shoulder with our own Burghers. All these elements, amongst whom our own relations and our best friends, were driven by the blindness of the Volksraad, inspired by Kruger, into the camp of those who wished no good to the Republic.

The alterations in the Franchise had moreover most unjust results in another direction. They took away rights which had been already acquired.

The diggers of Lydenburg and some of Barberton, who had flocked in large numbers to the Rand, had been in the country long enough to be entitled to citizenship; now they were suddenly deprived of it. Hitherto many of them had not valued this right as worth a pinch of snuff. As long as "our member"[1] kept his seat, they were content to let their interests remain in his safe hands. But when about to be deprived of this unvalued right, they felt its loss as a grievance indeed.

But worse remains to be told: No provision had been made for the Uitlander children born on the soil—those who knew no other home, no other

[1] Mr. R. K. Loveday, who represented Barberton continuously since it was granted a representative in the Volksraad.

Fatherland but the Republic. Many of them had lost the right of acquiring another nationality when their parents settled in the Transvaal; now they were to be tieless aliens; and in this way, this struggle, this line of cleavage was to be left a *hereditas damnosa* to the next generation also. The sons of the Uitlander were to grow up as a caste apart from the sons of the Burgher with whom they shared the comradeship of the school and the playground.

It was an unspeakable blunder, and bore in it the seeds of the certain destruction of the Republic. Except on the principle of *après nous le deluge*, it is difficult to imagine what the Boer expected to gain by it. Surely he could not hope to dam the tide for ever! Surely he should have realized that the day would dawn when the pressure could no longer be resisted, when the artificial flood-gates would burst asunder. How could he expect to maintain his policy of exclusion when the Uitlander, now nearly his equal in population, outnumbered him by two, by three, by ten to one? And when that day should come, what consideration, what assistance could he ask for, with not a single friend amongst the multitude, many of whom would have been his staunch supporters but for the way in which he had repelled them?

This action, as was to be anticipated, raised a storm of indignation on the Rand. Those who were least likely to avail themselves of the Franchise were loudest in their protests, and the Government had no one to defend it, for its conduct was indefensible.

While at the task of grumbling, the new-comer concluded that he might as well make a complete job of it, and bethought himself of a number of other grievances—some fictitious, others only too well founded on fact.

There was first the question of taxation—cheerfully paid in good times, but much resented when, owing to the vagaries of the share market, things were less prosperous. What was specially obnoxious was the import duty on foodstuffs, which necessarily raised the cost of living on the Rand. The new-comer forgot, or did not choose to remember, that these protective duties were a question of existence to the farmer—Dutch and English alike. Now the iron horse had come, and freight was so much cheaper than in the old ox-waggon days, the farmer could not possibly compete with imported cereals. Agriculture in South Africa, or at all events nine-tenths of it, is a work of patches, as no crops can be raised without irrigation, and the extent of arable land is dependent

upon the volume of the water supply and the level at which it can be taken from spruit or river. Thus competition was impossible with countries where the steam plough drew a straight furrow for miles and miles. What the Rand asked was, that while the mines were giving big returns on even the inflated price of their shares, the farmer should vote away his chance of profiting by the country's prosperity in order further to increase dividends; and this at a time when native wages, and with them obviously the expense of farming, had tremendously increased owing to the competition of the mines.

The next complaint—one completely justified—was that against the law which made use of the Dutch language in the Rand Courts, and even the public markets, compulsory. This was one of those cases in which the Boer put himself entirely in the wrong. He knew that he could not force his "taal" upon the new-comers. He himself showed that he realized this by having his children taught English when he could at all manage it. It was therefore wanton abuse of power, or at best a perverse sense of narrow-minded patriotism, which caused the enactment; yet every attempt to obtain relief failed. The result was annoying to a degree, and often ludicrous.

Imagine a court in which the evidence of a witness speaking English was laboriously translated from one language into another, although judge, counsel, and jury were equally acquainted with both tongues; in which in a suit between Englishmen every document handed in, every letter produced, had to be accompanied by a sworn translation! Still more absurd were the efforts to maintain the Dutch at the early morning market, where the products brought in by the farmers was sold by auction. Of course the bidding was in English; it was the only language the buyers understood. Presently some patriot from the Back Veld would discover to his intense indignation that the auctioneer, an official of the Republic, ignored its language and had the effrontery to use English in putting up to auction the harvest of the farm of a loyal Dutch Burgher. Was that to be tolerated? A complaint couched in indignant terms was sent to Pretoria, and was speedily followed by an order strictly to follow the Law.

The auctioneer complied; all he offered for sale was "put up" in Dutch; no bids resulted, since no one understood what he was talking about—to the great discomfiture of the Dutch farmers, who complained bitterly at the poor prices obtained from

one or other Afrikander in the audience. This would go on for a day or two till public indignation, both of vendors and purchasers, became too strong and English resumed its sway—until the next patriot turned up.

It has been stated that most Boers had their children taught English. When they did not, they generally regretted it. A good story dealing with this point throws a side-light on the character of General de la Rey, one of the finest and most open-minded members of the Volksraad.

The member for Johannesburg [1] presented, amongst other hardy annuals, a petition for permission to use the English language in the Courts of the Rand. A brother of the General—Piet de la Rey—was also in the Raad. He belonged, however, to the President's party, commonly known as "Ja-broers" (Yes-brothers) from the fidelity with which they said "Yes" to all proposals of the Government. Piet was taciturn and seldom addressed the Raad. On this occasion, however, he felt constrained to speak. "English to be used instead of Dutch in Republican public offices? Never! Rather than that he would take up his old gun again, to trek into the wilderness, or to fight, as the

[1] The writer.

President wished. Never would he consent while alive to such an abomination—for" (resuming his seat) "my land is my land, and my taal is my taal!"

As usual, the Progressive party,[1] which supported the petition, was beaten on division, to the special disgust of the General, who deeply resented his brother's speech.

A few weeks later Piet de la Rey received a letter from his son Jan, who had just been appointed as Customs Officer on the Western Frontier, and as such received a percentage on what he collected. The son expressed himself as extremely satisfied with his profits of the first month, but feared that he would have to throw up the billet, for, as he explained, "All the way-bills are in English, father, and as you would never let us children learn that language, I have got to believe what they tell me about them, and fear I may incur great liability." Then followed an appeal to his dad for advice.

The latter was in great tribulation, and, as was his wont, consulted the General. Silently the General read his nephew's letter; silently he returned it.

"But, brother," Piet appealed, "surely you will help me? Do say what I ought to write to Jan!"

[1] See Chapter XX.

"Tell him," the General answered, "that your land is your land, and your taal is your taal!"

Another matter which caused widespread discontent was the iniquitous system of concessions. Ostensibly, and perhaps honestly, granted in the first instance to foster local industries, they soon became mere gambling counters, or gratuities to those who were in the good graces of the Government. In few cases only were these monopolies to manufacture any and all articles a fertile and rapacious imagination could suggest brought to the stage of actual production. In most cases they were sold by the concessionaires for a few thousand pounds to a syndicate who hoped to (and occasionally did) make large sums out of them by floating a company for the purpose of exploiting them. Of these monopolies the most pernicious was the dynamite concession. It was originally granted as an additional inducement to establish a powder factory, for which, by itself, it was feared money could not be obtained, whereas the President was determined to manufacture his own ammunition within the Republic. The concessionaire not having complied with its terms, it was cancelled, but after battles extending over several years, and fought with the utmost bitter-

ness, it was, at the urgent insistence of the President, revived. It greatly raised the price of explosives, and so imposed a considerable burden on the mining industry, though the actual amount was much below the additional imposts the mines have been made to carry since the last war.

All these concessions (whether exploited, or only to be carried out when "better times came") were accompanied by heavy protective duties, and thus had the immediate effect of raising the price of the articles which eventually might or might not be produced within the country. They were therefore extremely unpopular, and often carried only by the strenuous efforts of the President. However, they could not be strictly called a Rand grievance, since most of them affected the whole country, and were as hotly opposed in Pretoria and elsewhere as in Johannesburg. Moreover, several of them were held by leading mining magnates. It was strange to see how the point of view changed sometimes, of which the following graphic instance may be cited.

A manufactory of sulphuric acid—required in large quantities at that time for the extraction of gold—had been established near the Rand. As soon as it was in full swing a monopoly for manufacturing the same article was applied for by people

who were known to have "friends at court." I was at the time member for Johannesburg in the First Volksraad, and the representative of the factory appealed to me to protect its interests. He brought samples to prove actual successful manufacture, and ample documentary evidence to show that the industry which had been established by him was self-supporting, and had neither received nor did it require any protection. To grant a monopoly, accompanied by the usual protective duties, would therefore not only kill a flourishing enterprise, but inflict a serious loss on the mines by raising the price of an article which was indispensable to them.

Armed with these weapons, I fought his battle, and succeeded in defeating the application; but my satisfaction at the victory was somewhat tempered when I found, a few months later, the same representative applying to the Raad, naturally through another member, for a protective duty on the same products, on the plea that this factory would otherwise be ruined by the competition of the imported article! This attempt actually succeeded, and it was only by great exertions, and by using the very evidence with which he had supplied me previously, that I succeeded in getting the proposed impost cut down by one-half.

The concessionaire who was most conspicuous (since the dynamite monopoly had been granted to him) was Mr. Edward Lippert. Hence the punning local reproduction of Madame Roland's famous exclamation: "Oh, Lippert, E., Lippert, E., what crimes are committed in thy name!"

On the other hand, too much was made of another charge against the Boer administration, namely, that of bribery. No doubt there were some instances of corruption. It would, indeed, have been strange had it been otherwise when we remember the tremendous temptations to which officials, hitherto living amidst most modest surroundings, often quite recently appointed (since the staff of every office had to be constantly augmented), were exposed when they came in contact with people who had grown rich beyond the dreams of avarice in a few years, and to whom the favour of the man in authority might make a difference of many thousands. But—and this is greatly to the credit of the South African official as a class—the charge of general wide-spread corruption can be easily disproved, and in more than one way. The best evidence to the contrary is the fact that since the war the English Government has offered appointments to many if not most of the old chief officials. It is also a fact

that almost all of them—including those who had unlimited opportunities for pilfer, had they stooped to it—remained poor men. Finally, the Volksraad passed drastic laws against bribery, which were enforced in more than one instance, prosecutions by the State resulting in conviction and severe sentences.

The existence of the so-called "Third Volksraad," a combination of lobbyists and hangers-on, certainly furnishes some evidence in the contrary direction; but it naturally cannot be ascertained how much of the money they received for the purpose of "distribution" reached those for whom it was intended. Probably very little of it did.

A grave scandal was caused by the acceptance of presents of watches and carriages by a good many members of the Volksraad from some people who had just secured a railway concession. This was, however, at an early stage of development, and the offending members, most of whom probably did not realize what they did when they accepted the gifts (after they had voted) had an exceedingly bad time of it both in and out of the House.

The general administration of the country was much less open to criticism than might have been expected. Indeed, it is a matter of surprise that it was not worse. The Boers were in the position of the crew of a small coasting lugger who, without

any choice on their part, are put in charge of a huge ocean liner. The wonder is that they managed to keep the engines going. Probably they would have broken down but for the assistance of the Hollanders; this, however, belongs to a later chapter.

A weak spot was undoubtedly the administration of the liquor laws. The acts in themselves were satisfactory enough, but a great deal of illicit selling took place—in some cases with the connivance of the police; but then that force has been said not to be above reproach elsewhere.

Amongst all these real and fictitious complaints, not to mention some others of a minor nature, the one that was invariably pushed to the forefront was, however, that of the Franchise, for the simple reason that, owing to the perverse imbecility of the altered acts, it was the one subject upon which all classes and races of the Uitlander community felt and acted in unison. It has already been shown that many of the people on the Rand had a very real and serious grievance on this subject; and up to a certain time even the Britisher had a legitimate complaint, for he believed that he would be able to become a Burgher of the Republic without losing his status as citizen of the British Empire. From the moment, however, that it was

ascertained, beyond chance of doubt or cavil, that the two citizenships were incompatible, and that the acceptance of the one implied the loss of the other, the demand became, as far as Englishmen were concerned, a mere academical one; indeed, futile except as a subterfuge. For what Englishman would barter his birthright as such, for the citizenship of this or any other Republic? This was so obvious, that Mr. Lionel Phillips' letter, published after the Raid by the Boer Government, was hardly required to confirm it. This aspect was, however, as much as possible ignored; the cry was too valuable to be relinquished as long as it could be made to serve its purpose.

An incident bearing on the point took place at the Rand Club. A Republican, tired of the everlasting cry for a vote, faced the crowd in the smoking-room. "Now look here," he said, "is there one single man amongst the Englishmen here who would become a Burgher if he could get the Franchise to-morrow?" There was an embarrassed silence. At last one man stepped forward—a former officer in Her Majesty's army.

"You!" the interlocutor exclaimed. "You! of all the people in the world?"

"Yes," was the reply. "I should have to, for

in a weak moment I publicly stated that I would take the vote if it were offered me, and I do not see how I can get out of it!"

Unfortunately this concentration of the general sense of grievance and discontent upon this one point very much increased the difficulties of securing relief in other matters. The Boer came to the conviction that this one issue (one which he, rightly or wrongly, believed to be vital to his interests) was all the Uitlander cared for, and that no concessions he could make on other questions would relieve the Burgher of this incessant demand for what he thought would result in either the creation of an *imperium in imperio*, or the loss of his independence. The tone assumed by both the press and the platform of Johannesburg was exacting and dictatorial in the extreme. "You are the biggest enemies the Uitlander has," the editor of the leading Johannesburg paper said to the members for Barberton and the Rand; "for by the exercise of your abilities and energy you make our conditions just bearable. But for you we would have got to the end of our patience long ago, and matters would be quite different to-day. You go about obtaining reforms in absolutely the wrong way. You attempt to reason with the Government; what you should do is to tell the

Boer two things—the first, that we *can* shoot; and the second, that we *will* shoot!"

So mistrust and misunderstanding widened the breach day by day. No doubt there were many who wanted one thing only—British intervention; whose biggest grievance of all would have been if there had been no grievance left to complain of. These were comparatively few in number, but they fanned the flame; and they were much assisted by the policy of the President and the majority of his Parliamentary following. This was now about to culminate in action, which all but precipitated an open breach both with the Rand and with the British Government.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE MALABOCH WAR. SIR HENRY LOCH.

In 1882 the Transvaal became involved in a struggle with a native chief called Mapoch, who had given shelter to the murderer (Mampoer) of Sekukuni, the whilom foe of the Transvaal. This campaign taxed the resources of the State to the utmost, but was brought to a successful issue by the Burghers themselves without any assistance from the strangers who had begun to dwell in their midst. The decisive victory of the Boers ensured safety from native troubles for many years. But in 1894 a smaller chief, called Malaboch, became recalcitrant, and an expedition had to be sent to subdue him. His tribe was not a large one, but his stronghold was well nigh impregnable, as it consisted of a series of caves which pierced a wooded range, and which, in most instances, communicated with each other, and were therefore easy to defend. Besides, it was quite possible that Malaboch

would have the support of other chiefs. It was necessary therefore to send a large force.

Now the Boer saw no reason why he alone should be called upon to risk his life, when the Uitlander, who was evidently extracting a good deal more wealth from the country than the Burgher had been able to obtain, was sitting in Johannesburg in safety and ease, while the Boer—to use his favourite phrase—"had to bear the heat of the day, and the cold of the night."

The legal aspect of the question whether the Uitlander could be called upon to assist in the defence of the Republic was somewhat complicated. The law of the land clearly favoured the contention of the Boer; but, under the conventions which restored the independence of the Republic, British citizens were entitled to at least the same consideration as those of other powers, and in a treaty entered into with Portugal the subjects of the latter could not be called upon by the Republic for military service. It was evident, therefore, that action in this matter might bring the Republic in conflict with both the Uitlander and the British Government, so that it would be extremely hazardous to raise the point; yet that is what the Kruger Government did.

As soon as it became known that some twenty Englishmen had been commandeered in Pretoria, and that a similar course would probably be adopted on the Rand, Johannesburg was up in arms. What! Fight for a country which refused them all civil rights, which looked upon the Rand as a step-child, if not a foundling? Never!

There was only one thing, they held, that a self-respecting Rand could do when so treated: resist, and appeal to the "Suzerain," the British Government, for protection!

It is unnecessary to enter into the vexed controversy on Suzerainty, which rests on the interpretation of the two conventions, or rather the question whether the conclusion of the second cancelled the preamble of the first. A legal decision of the matter was never given, since England refused the offer of the Transvaal to submit it to arbitration, or even to the judgment of a court consisting of judges of neutral nationality, presided over by the Lord Chief Justice of England. It has now been finally settled and disposed of by the arbitrament of the sword. At this moment, however, the issue was whether British subjects could be compelled to fight for the Republic while the citizens of other countries

were free from such service. Of those commandeered in Pretoria several refused to go; they were arrested and kept in custody.

This was more than England was inclined to bear. Protest followed protest, each more peremptory than the last, and finally the High Commissioner, Sir Henry Loch, came to Pretoria to insist upon the liberation of the imprisoned Britishers, and upon obtaining a complete and final settlement of this question in accordance with the British view.

Sir Henry Loch easily gained his point. In fact, he could have done so without leaving Cape Town; for the Boer Government had by that time realized, not only the danger of raising the issue at all, but of consenting to his Excellency's proposal to come to the Transvaal to discuss this question. However, it was too late to stop him, and what was feared happened.

Johannesburg, or rather the extreme section there, looked upon him as their St. George who had come to slay the Boer Dragon. Indeed, much indignation was expressed at the Rand when their "Deliverer" passed Johannesburg on his way up, and went to, as well as returned from, Pretoria direct. However, he received several Uitlander Deputations, and remained in

close touch with them all through the negotiations.

The folly of teaching the English section, who formed the majority at the Rand, to look upon the British Government as their Advocate and Protector is so obvious, that it is to be marvelled at how so shrewd a man as Mr. Kruger failed to see the danger, until too late.

Indeed, the vital importance of the issue seemed to warp the President's usual keen judgment in all matters affecting the Franchise, and the status of the new-comer generally.

It had been arranged that Sir Henry Loch should, while on his visit, discuss other outstanding questions with the Transvaal Government, the chief of which were the control of Swaziland, and the "port" of Kosi Bay.

The former was the cause of some very bitter feeling, absolutely justified, on the part of the Boers. They contended that they had bought Swaziland from England, that they had paid the price, and that they were now being tricked out of what they had purchased and paid for.

There is a close connection between this matter and the occupation of Rhodesia by Mr. Rhodes and his Chartered Company. The history of the acquisition of the concession from Lobengula is

one of the most romantic and exciting episodes in the annals of South Africa, and when it is told some day (as it is to be hoped it will) by Mr. "Matabele" Thompson, who risked his life over and over again to obtain the grant from the Matabele King, the tale will form one of the most thrilling narratives ever penned. Suffice it here to say, that the whole enterprise bristled with difficulties, not only in South Africa, but also in England.[1]

Not the least amongst these was the possibility of Boer interference. Lobengula, who was "jibbing" at the time, was in touch with several leading Dutch Frontiermen, amongst whom were Transvaal officials. A Boer trek to the North was anticipated. This had to be stopped at any price. Rhodes, true to his maxim that "all men could be squared," sent a representative to Pretoria, whose authority to

[1] One most characteristic episode, not previously published, may be given here. Mr. Rhodes was in the North when he received a cable from London, telling him of new demands which were being made before success could be attained. Of all men he was least addicted to cant or "unctuous rectitude." His reply was typically frank. "Tell our friends," he cabled, "that I well know the predatory instincts of the men of our race, who prey on each other when they cannot prey on the stranger; but I am d—d if they shall prey on me!"

speak on behalf of the British Government could not be questioned, and who was on terms of mutual confidence—if not friendship—with President Kruger. Swaziland was offered to the President on condition that he would leave the North free. Kruger accepted the proposal, and scrupulously carried out his part of the contract; but when it came to collecting the *quid pro quo*, all kinds of difficulties were raised, and at first the Republic could only obtain joint control. Kruger, however, continued to press the point, which had now to be settled. With characteristic foresight, the Boer Government had acquired several most important concessions given by the king,[1] already referred to, and which, however preposterous, were legally granted, and had been confirmed by a mixed English and Boer tribunal sent up to investigate them. Without these it was practically impossible to govern the country. Whoever might have the shell—Kruger held the kernel.

The High Commissioner soon found that he was powerless, both *de jure* and *de facto*, and an arrangement was entered into which was to lead to

[1] Including the monopolies of postal and telegraphic communication, of banking, and of the levying of custom duties!

the gradual absorption of Swaziland by the Transvaal.

Kosi Bay was another matter in which the Boers had a well-founded grievance. Kruger's dream was to own his own port. All those worth having being in possession of others, he had to be content with one which was practically useless. It consisted of a lagoon which could be made to serve its purpose, to an inadequate extent even, only by a huge expenditure of money.

However, he had cast his eye on it, and its possession became almost a passion with him. He had concluded a treaty with the native chiefs, Zambaan and Umbegesa, who owned it, and the approach to it. England was asked whether it had any objection to its acquisition. The reply was that the British Government saw no reason for opposing the wishes of the Republic; but subsequently England attached several conditions to its consent, amongst which was the stipulation that the Republic should enter a South African Customs Union; and ultimately (March, 1895) the British Government annexed the territory in question. The Boer Government deeply resented this change into a conditional consent, and subsequent entire withdrawal, of what had originally been an unreserved acquiescence.

It has always been a mystery why the English Government took up this stand. British interests had nothing whatever to dread from this "port." In times of peace it would have been at best a very expensive toy—in case of possible war a most vulnerable point in the Boer armour.

How differently matters would have shaped in 1900 if Lorenço Marques had belonged to the Boers!

CHAPTER XIX.

PRESIDENT KRUGER.

The foremost figure in the history of the Transvaal is undoubtedly that of Stephanus Johannes Paulus Kruger, four times President of the South African Republic.

Of the "Old Boer"—the relic of the Seventeenth Century—Paul Kruger was the archtype, possessing all the characteristics, the virtues as well as the defects, of that race in a concentrated form. He was a child of the Great Trek in the very sense of the word, since he had accompanied it as a boy of thirteen or fourteen—at that time noted already for his sturdy self-reliance and prowess with the rifle!

The President had received the scantiest education. To what height his marvellous intellect, coupled as it was with indomitable will power, would have risen, if it had been properly disciplined—it is difficult to imagine. Untrained as he was, he found himself pitted against some of

the keenest minds in Europe, and was not often vanquished in diplomatic struggle; and if at the last, he saw the work of his life crumbling into dust; if in the end he was powerless to save that which he had so strenuously, so passionately, sought to preserve and perpetuate, the failure was due partly no doubt to the enormous difficulties and unprecedented obstacles which fate threw in his way; but largely to the defects of his type. Virile and unbending in the highest degree, Kruger refused to accommodate himself to circumstances, and, disdaining to stoop, he was crushed by the irresistible storm he encountered.

His strength of purpose, his diplomatic abilities, his rough but most effective eloquence, it is unnecessary to accentuate. They gained the admiration even of his enemies. The defects, the failings which largely nullified these qualities, should not be dilated upon here, since they are atoned for by his misfortunes, and covered by his grave.

It may be safely asserted that Mr. Kruger would have distinguished himself in any vocation for which he had been trained. He delivered powerful and closely-reasoned sermons in the pulpit of the church which faced the Presidency in Pretoria; and in knowledge of Scripture he surpassed many

a clergyman. As a lawyer he would certainly have attained success. This is shown by the following occurrence, which also incidentally illustrates the difficulties often encountered by the Government in their anxiety to content the newcomer.

The rapid increase of Johannesburg soon outgrew its water supply, and in the "dry season" of several successive years there was all but a water famine. This condition of affairs naturally caused much suffering, especially amongst the poorer classes, and also seriously affected the health of the town. It was found that the springs in the neighbourhood were altogether insufficient for the requirements of Johannesburg and the mines, and though the company which was responsible for the water supply attempted to replenish its dwindling store by exploding heavy charges of dynamite[1]

[1] This action roused a storm of indignation in the Backveld country, and hundreds of petitions were presented to the Volksraad protesting against so impious a proceeding. Several of the retrogressive members of the Raad strongly supported the request to prevent any repetition of the experiment by legislation, on the grounds that it amounted to a defiance of the Almighty, who would send rain when He deemed it well, and that to compel the clouds to the service of man until it was His will could be regarded as nothing short of sacrilege. To the consternation of the Progressive Party one of their number actually supported the petitioners,

suspended from balloons, the clouds refused to be coaxed into yielding up their moisture. The position was getting worse and worse. It appeared that water would have to be brought from a long distance, and at great expense. It was under these circumstances that the Volksraad voted the annual grant-in-aid of £20,000 already mentioned. No sooner was this money available, however, than a keen struggle commenced for its possession. Three or four different "groups" were proffering water supplies, each extolling its own as preferable beyond comparison with those of the others. The existing water company also acquired additional sources, and a most determined scramble commenced between all these conflicting interests.

but when he gave his reasons for doing so, their surprise was mitigated. Mr. Maré said that he too held that that conduct of the water company was an affront to Providence, but not on the same grounds as the previous speakers. He did not think that the Power above would take much notice of the explosions. He would think them beneath Him in every way. But there was a serious aspect of the question. For what purpose, he asked, had Providence given us dynamite? To rend the rocks, and compel them to yield up their gold so that the rich might prosper and the poor might find the wherewithal to live. But not—surely not—for the purpose of wasting it in fruitless explosions on the clouds? Such action was one of base ingratitude, and should be stopped by every means at our disposal.

As may be anticipated, this speech effectively killed the proposals.

The Sanitary Board supported the "Wonderfontein" scheme, the cost of which was estimated at anything up to half a million pounds. The moment it appeared that this proposition had a good chance of being adopted, all the other interests combined against it. The Government, anxious to ascertain the wishes of the majority of the inhabitants, decided that a public meeting should be called, and the matter put to the vote. A very large building was obtained for the purpose, but no vote was taken—since the proceedings began and ended in pandemonium. Each group took precautions to prevent its rivals from getting a hearing. The result may be imagined.

The Government then decreed that the matter should be decided by ballot. The question, however, arose: who was to vote? The owners of property strongly objected to their tenants having any voice in the matter. The burden of any loan, they argued, would fall upon their properties; the tenants might leave Johannesburg, attracted perhaps by some other discovery in or out of the State, but the properties would remain to carry the debt. To enforce these views a deputation met the President. Mr. Kruger listened in silence to their statements, then turned and rent them. "Are you not the same people who came here

some months ago asking for the Franchise? At that time you claimed a voice in the affairs of the Republic, with its many million pounds of interests, and what is more, its independence, and to-day, when you fear your pockets may be affected to the extent of a few thousands, you ask that the vote in its own affairs, which Johannesburg already possesses, shall be taken away? Then you said you had all come to stay, now you express the fear that many of you may leave. What am I to make of you?"

This ballot having also thus proved unacceptable to Johannesburg, matters came to a deadlock. The situation was, however, becoming impossible, and at last the Government resolved to call the rival interests before it, hear what they had to say, and decide the matter itself.

The tale is now taken up by Mr. L., the leader of the Transvaal Bar, one of the President's most determined political foes, but personally on good terms with him. In fact the President liked him, and had nicknamed him "Windhond."[1]

Mr. L. says that when they entered the Presence they found the Executive Council ranged in a semi-circle, Mr. Kruger in the centre. Mr. L. appeared for the existing water company. Other

[1] Greyhound.

interests were also represented—the Sanitary Board by its Chairman, who urged the advantages of the Wonderfontein scheme. He was asked to open the debate. A long and desultory discussion ensued in which the President took little or no interest. He was leaning back in his chair, his eyes dreamily following to the ceiling the clouds of smoke from his long pipe. Evidently his thoughts were far away. After much talk, the Board Chairman made an assertion which seriously affected the legal position of the water company. He did so without accentuating it in any way, but before Mr. L. could lift his pencil to make a note of it, Mr. Kruger turned round with the swiftness of lightning, pointed his pipe at Mr. L., and ejaculated: "There, Windhond, defend yourself against that!"[1] He had seen the point before even the brilliant lawyer had done so.

There are a few other phases of the President's character on which side-lights may well be thrown. That Kruger had the saving grace of humour has been illustrated by many a story which has seen the light—such as the reply to the boast of the Duke of A. (who informed him that his Grace's father had been twice Lord Lieutenant of Ireland) "My father was a shepherd!" his

[1] "Toe, Windhond, weer jou nou!"

remark, on precipitately retreating from a Parisian ball-room, "that they must have come too early, as the ladies were evidently not dressed yet!" and that other instance (of the grim kind) when he opened a new Synagogue in Johannesburg in the Name of the Saviour. As a fact, the President understood and dearly loved a joke, even when the point was directed against himself. On one occasion a member of a Volksraad Committee (which bodies often met at the Presidency, where they were regaled with coffee and cigars) condoled with Mr. Kruger on his recent severe financial reverses. The President, astonished, asked what his guest referred to. The reply was, "To your unfortunate losses on the Stock Exchange." "You know I never gamble," the President indignantly replied. "Well, but there must be something in it," was the answer. "How dare you say that!" the President shouted. "I tell you I haven't lost a penny in that or any other speculation!" "Then how is it we get no cigars to-day?" was the plaintive question. "I beg your pardon, your pardon!" was the answer, as with a chuckle the President set out himself in quest of the fragrant weed.

The President's self-possession was a trait which was constantly in evidence. He was always him-

self, and even when he lost his temper—which was not seldom—he did not lose his head ; in fact, many people believed that he was often far less angry than he appeared to be. Be that as it may, his storms of wrath were awkward to encounter, and not many cared to face them. His nerve and stoicism were shown in many ways; as in the well-known instance when, finding his thumb shattered by the bursting of his gun, he cut off the dangling bone with his pocket-knife. This indifference to pain was a quality which was largely shared by those of his race who were least in touch with latter-day civilization—the Backveld Boer. Several Pretorian ladies, who had volunteered as nurses on the Hospital train which ran between Pretoria and Ladysmith during the last war, were much impressed with the Boers' disregard of pain. The wounded would often refuse chloroform. "How could they know," they asked, "what would be done to them while they were 'bedwelmd' (stunned) like that? No, they liked to see what was going on!" And so they calmly looked on during severe operations, while perhaps some deep-seated bullet was extracted from their foot—with never a wince or a groan.[1]

[1] These nurses said that the extent to which pluck and nerve were combined with almost childishness—or rather

Before closing this chapter, Mr. Kruger's memory should be cleared of some misconceptions—or rather calumnies.

That the President was rich has often been imputed to him as a crime. There is no reason whatever to believe that any part of his wealth was gained in questionable ways. By no means averse to seeing his friends and relations enrich themselves by concessions and similar means, he himself did not share in the spoils. His financial prosperity is easily explicable in other ways. He had acquired much land, at a time when it went begging, and sold it when it rose in value. The farm Geduld alone—a valuable mining property—which he purchased for a few hundreds, brought many thousand pounds into his purse. He did not spend a quarter of his salary, and invested the balance to advantage. The story of the millions he was said to have taken with him to Europe is a myth. Equally untrue is the accusation that he

child-likeness—in these big, brawny people was almost unbelievable. They used to be full of fun, ready to play jokes even when they were seriously ill. A favourite jest of theirs was to hide the clinical thermometers—though in the beginning they had regarded these articles with great awe, and had looked upon them as part of the cure. "Sister," one of them said, "do put that glass thing under my tongue again. It does me such a lot of good. I can feel how it draws the fever out of me!"

left South Africa during the last war because he did not care to face its risks; indeed, this is the basest calumny of all. Courage, mental and physical, was one of his distinguishing traits, and he was quite prepared, nay eager, to go to the front. A pathetic tale is related by a prominent Johannesburger,[1] one of the few who were also Burghers of the Republic. This gentleman called on the President shortly after the commencement of the war. Mr. Kruger was busy, his visitor was told; the caller, however, persisted, and finally appealed to Mrs. Kruger, who, after giving her guest a cup of coffee, mysteriously took him to a small window overlooking the back-yard. Here he saw the old gentleman, rifle in hand and girt with bandolier, practising mounting a horse again —an exercise which he had abandoned for years. He was determined to "go with his men," and when he found riding beyond his strength, he often insisted upon accompanying the Commandos in a carriage. The generals found his presence an embarrassing honour, since he refused to retire when it was found expedient to retreat. On several occasions he was all but captured, and it was with much relief that the Commanding Officers heard of his departure for Europe. It

[1] Mr. Julius Jeppe.

was with the greatest difficulty only that he was persuaded to leave, on the plea that his presence in Europe might enlist the sympathies, and lead to intervention by the Continental Powers, who had previously received him with so much distinction.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PROGRESSIVE PARTY.

It is by no means to be supposed that the policy of the Government, as described in preceding pages, had the unanimous approval of the Boers. Indeed, the concession policy, the suppression of the English language, the quarrels with the British Government over Swaziland and Kosi Bay, and, above all, the attitude of the President towards Johannesburg, and his denial of civic rights to the new-comers, were severely criticized and condemned by a large faction, if not by the majority, of the Burghers.

This party was represented in the Volksraad by the Progressives, and for many years a determined struggle was carried on between it and the supporters of the Government. Small in the beginning, it soon gained in strength. Its first task was to politically educate the Boer, and to bring home to the voter the perils of the course the President was pursuing. Several newspapers

were started, and by this means, and an active campaign both in Parliament and in the country, the Progressives soon convinced the more enlightened Boers that the only chance of saving the existence of the Republic was to arrive at, and maintain, a good understanding with the new-comers, and to absorb and assimilate all those amongst them who wished to become Burghers of the Republic.

Naturally the Progressives met with much vituperation. They were called "Britishers" and traitors; but this did not deter them, and they soon gained many adherents in the country. These formed themselves into several associations, ultimately merging into one powerful combination; and it soon became evident that the majority, or all but the majority, of the Burghers were on their side. A very keen struggle then ensued for the mastery.

At this juncture[1] a presidential election afforded the opportunity of a trial of strength. The Progressives threw down the gauntlet to Kruger, and adopted the late Commandant-General, Piet Joubert, as their candidate. Joubert was, next to Kruger, undoubtedly the keenest intellect amongst the Boers. Much better educated than his

[1] 1893.

opponent, a still more eloquent speaker, more enlightened and broad-minded, and possessing a nimbleness of mind which almost amounted to cunning, he yet was no match for the President, since he lacked moral courage. He could never be got to face Kruger in debate; and, in all the long struggle between them, it was always Joubert's heart that failed at the crucial moment, and left the victory with his opponent. On this occasion, too, he had only himself to thank for his defeat. To this day his party maintains that he won at the poll, but was beaten at the counting of the votes. This was the time he should have asserted himself, but "counsels of prudence" prevailed and he withdrew, on the plea that persistence would cause a quarrel which might endanger the Republic.

To-day it seems reasonable to believe that persistence would possibly have been the means of saving it.

In the Volksraad the struggle was one *à outrance*. The Progressive members were fully convinced that a continuation of the Kruger tactics could in the end have only one result—the loss of the country's independence. They strained every nerve therefore to bring about a saner policy, and a better understanding between

Pretoria and Johannesburg. Their action on this point was assailed with a storm of denunciation; the basest and most sordid motives were imputed to them. When this failed to intimidate them, cajolery and offers of office were tried, but neither threats nor bribes moved them from their path.

That the success of their endeavours would have saved the Republic is scarcely to be doubted. To give one instance only, the Progressives proposed in the session of 1893 the very same terms of Franchise which were demanded many months later by Lord Milner from Mr. Kruger at the point of the sword, and practically conceded by him when too late!

The names of the Progressive Members in the Volksraad—for they should be recorded—were Lukas Meyer, Koos de la Rey, Louis Botha (all three generals subsequently), the two brothers Lodewyk and Gert de Jager, Jacob van Wyk, and Paul Maré. They were joined of course by the members for Barberton and Johannesburg. The former, Mr. R. K. Loveday, was indeed the founder of the party, for it was his able exposition of the dangers of the Kruger policy which first opened the eyes of the Boer. The party was generally supported by Mr. Schalk Burger.

In the second Volksraad the Progressives were

still stronger; the restricted powers of that body, however, made it impossible for them to intervene in most matters which were of real importance. But in the first chamber even, consisting as it did of twenty-six members only, the Progressives carried considerable weight, especially as they had so large a party in the country behind them. There were other members, too, who were often amenable to their arguments and appeals. Unfortunately, however, these could not be relied upon, and generally succumbed when exposed to the fierce blasts of Presidential eloquence. For in all matters, small and great, Mr. Kruger intervened, and often when the battle was all but won by the Progressives, the President's torrential harangues carried the day against them.

Unfortunately a general appeal to the country was impossible, since only one half of the Raad retired at intervals of two years. Thus the imposing of the will of the Electorate on the representatives was a matter of considerable time; and time, unfortunately, was precious.

Nevertheless the Progressive Party was more than once on the eve of success. At one time it actually had the majority, but the death of one member, and the secession of another, defeated its hopes of ascendency.

Still they were gaining ground, and would probably have prevailed before long, when events intervened which made a peaceful solution of the problem impossible.

Two consolations, however, are with the Progressives. They did all that in them lay to save their country. And when all their endeavours proved futile, when their worst fears were realized, and they found the Republic pitted against irresistible strength, the great majority of those who led the Commandos in victory and defeat, and of the Burghers who fought for independence until the bitter end, were members of the Progressive party.

CHAPTER XXI.

HOLLANDER INFLUENCE.

Amongst the baneful interests which surrounded President Kruger, and which made it difficult to get his ear when pressing for reforms, the counsels of the Hollander were generally supposed to be the most pernicious.

This impression, however, strongly as it has been supported, is an entirely mistaken one. With the single exception of Doctor Leyds, no Hollander had any important part in shaping Mr. Kruger's views or influencing his course of action.

It has already been explained that the Boer had little in common with, and did not like, his cousin from beyond the sea; but the former found that he could not do without the Hollander. The influx of so large a population put an immense strain on the administration. The Government was at its wits' end for official assistance, and but for the help of the Netherlander

it would not have been able to carry on the administration at all.

It is remarkable how the officials already in the employment of the Republic rose to the occasion and grappled with their new overwhelming tasks. But as these increased in magnitude, they required more and more assistance. It would have seemed obvious that the best place to look for official help would have been amongst the Afrikanders in the Cape Colony, who spoke Dutch, and had had the advantage of an excellent educational system. Mr. Kruger, who had a long memory, remembered, however, that many of the Pretorians who had sided with the British in 1880 had been Cape Afrikanders, and he was determined to employ only those whom he could absolutely trust. Here came the opportunity of the Netherlander. Well educated and industrious, he made an excellent official; but he never had the preference. The first to be selected was always the Boer or Transvaaler, with some pretensions to education, and often those without it. With the exception of the Education Department, all the "Heads" were Afrikanders. Often these were Boers, pure and simple, who, thanks to their natural shrewdness, were able to direct affairs in their department

in a general way, while utterly incompetent to write a letter or frame a report, and who had to rely therefore entirely on their clerks to carry out the routine of the office.

A good story is told on this subject.

An old friend of the President had fallen on evil days, and came to Mr. Kruger for help.

"I have lost my farm," he said, "now you must get me an appointment."

The President promised to do what he could; but on the following day had, much to his regret. to report failure.

"But surely there must be some post open which you can give me," the applicant pleaded.

"Not one," Kruger sorrowfully replied. "I have tried everywhere. All the chief offices are filled up, old man; and as to a clerkship—well—you know yourself, for that you are too stupid!"

The Hollanders themselves often complained that they were only used as tools, and resented the treatment they received.

An instance in point is that of Doctor Köster—once Attorney-General—who, after a quarrel with the President, left for the front in the late war, with the message to Kruger that "he would show him that he could fight for the Republic." He fell in the first battle.

Indeed, the Boer's faith in the loyalty of the Hollander was fully justified; almost to a man they joined the forces of the Republic, and many laid down their life for it.

The one man who no doubt exercised much influence in shaping the policy of the Government—Doctor Leyds—was and remains a sphinx, since he practised the supreme art of silence. To his best friends even he was a riddle. Cultured, proud, he served the Retrogressives amongst the Boers, for whom intellectually he harboured the greatest contempt; a man of broad views, he supported a cause founded on narrow-mindedness. Too clear-sighted not to see the rocks which would inevitably wreck the ship, he did nothing to change its course. Many hard things have been said of him; but those of his political opponents who know him best acquit him of any tainted motives. The worst that can be said of him is, that in furtherance of his schemes, prompted as they may have been by unselfish rather than self-seeking aims, he did not refrain from appealing to, if not fostering, the lower instincts, the defects and failings of those whom he should have guided to better things.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE DRIFT ULTIMATUM.

Mr. Kruger's Government, engaged as it already was in quarrels with England and with the Rand, was now to embroil itself in a serious conflict with the Cape Colony. In this instance, however, the fault could hardly be attributed to the Republic.

Reference has already been made to the commendable action of the Government in sanctioning railway connections with Natal and the Cape Colony, though these competed with the Delagoa Bay Line, for the success of which the Republic had made itself responsible. We have seen also how the trade of the Transvaal was equally apportioned between the three lines.

Unfortunately, Sir James Sivewright was to be followed in office by a gentleman who as a diplomat was his exact antithesis. The Cape Colony declared itself dissatisfied with its one-

third of the Transvaal trade and demanded at least one-half. Now, as Natal had been given one-third already, this would have left one-sixth for the Delagoa Bay line—clearly an impossible proposal, and one that had to be refused. The Cape then declared a railway war, and commenced lowering its rates. The Transvaal replied by successively raising those on the short connection to the Border, so that ultimately the freight for those fifty miles reached eight or nine shillings per ton. This was evidently not a paying game—to the Cape Colony, and its Government now threatened to unload the goods it carried at the border at Vereeniging, and bring them on to Johannesburg by a waggon transport service which it proposed to establish, so cutting out the Transvaal section of the railway altogether.

The answer of the Transvaal was a proclamation closing the drift over the Vaal River at Vereeniging for Custom House purposes. Under the Convention it had the right to fix "ports of entry" at its will, and it was therefore within its rights in this action. Unfortunately, however, the Government of the Republic, as an act of friendship to the Cape farmers, most of whom are Dutch also, and who largely depended upon the

Johannesburg market, made an exception in favour of the products of the Cape Colony, though the Convention stipulated that there should be no inequality of treatment. The Transvaal Government ran a certain risk, therefore; but it did not anticipate much trouble, since the exception was made in favour of Cape Colonists and was also of great benefit to the Rand, whose markets could ill afford to lose the Cape products. However, to the great surprise of the Government, its action nowhere aroused more resentment than in Johannesburg, and with the Cape Ministry then kept in power by the votes of the Dutch farmer. Great Britain took up the matter with much vigour, and launched protests, the last all but tantamount to an ultimatum. The President, when he heard how his concession was received by the very people whom it was intended to benefit, shrugged his shoulders and withdrew the proclamation. The issue of a second—without any good-natured exceptions this time—was made unnecessary by the acceptance by the Cape Colony of its third of the traffic.[1]

[1] How delighted the Cape would be to have a similar proportion of the Transvaal trade at this present day, when it finds itself engaged in a desperate rate-cutting war with the Transvaal and Natal, in order to retain the remnant of its dwindled share in the traffic to the North!

In Pretoria the matter was not looked upon as serious; but it appeared later on that England and the Cape Colony were preparing for the gravest steps; and it showed the precipice on the edge of which the Republic was walking. Would that its guide had been less obstinate as to the best road to choose for its footsteps!

CHAPTER XXIII.

JOHANNESBURG AT BAY.

We have seen how the good understanding which had for some time existed between the Burgher and the new-comer had, largely through the fault of the Government, been changed into discord and dissension, and how the flame of discontent had been fanned by those whose one aim and object was to see the English Flag wave over the Transvaal; and indeed they could hardly be blamed. Conscious of all they had done for the Rand and for the country, they deeply resented that they should be excluded from the right of all free men—to have a voice and assist in their own government. It was a little humiliating to find, as one of the leading men said, that his groom had a vote, and so had the husband of his cook, but that he himself was a political outcast. And we have seen that the Raad in its folly had united the entire population of the Rand against the Republic.

All this, however, by no means implied that Johannesburg, as a whole, wanted the Union Jack. On the contrary, the majority of the inhabitants were quite content with the form of government, as long as the grievances of which they complained were remedied; and these looked with eager sympathy upon the struggles of the Progressives in the Raad. Unfortunately, matters improved very slowly. The reasons of this delay have already been explained, but a good many of the Moderate Party at the Rand began to lose hope. Others again rather welcomed the increasingly threatening tone adopted by the Johannesburg press, since this might make the Boer realize the gravity of the situation, and induce him to put his house in order. These Moderates were quite prepared to let the Forward Party try the effects of a game of bluff, since, if successful, they would share in the benefits. They would do nothing against the Government, but why, they asked, should they do anything to assist it?

In the meantime the Forwards resolved to act. It was said—probably with little truth—that Sir Henry Loch had promised intervention if Johannesburg asserted itself. The statement, however, helped a good many people to make up their

minds; but the leaders realized that even if intervention came, it would be a little late for their purposes, for unless they were armed, the Boers would annihilate Johannesburg before any help from beyond the border could reach it.

They commenced, therefore, secretly to import arms, and succeeded in doing so to a limited extent. It proved no easy task to get rifles and revolvers smuggled in, even when disguised as German pianos. Some inquisitive Custom House officer might expose the entire game.

And then Mr. Rhodes was approached, and Dr. Jameson came up to see the leaders and report how matters stood.

In the meantime the Forwards went about like Peter the Apostle—winning men. All likely people were approached and sounded, with much caution in the first instance. When there was no response, the matter was dropped for the moment; if the overtures were received sympathetically, the advances were pushed forward. But it was soon found that there were widely divergent views, which it was not easy—indeed, as we shall see later impossible—to reconcile. So each individual was told just what was good for him to know. It is to be doubted whether, with the exception of the "Inner Circle," half a dozen men on the Reform

Committee fully knew what the extent and scope of the intended movement was.

All these preparations were naturally conducted in the deepest secrecy—a secrecy wonderfully well maintained, considering how many people knew something of what was going on. The Boers, at all events, and those who sympathized with them, were entirely in the dark, so that the Progressive Party did not sever the touch it had always maintained with the leaders of Johannesburg, and did not relax its effort to obtain reforms.

That breach, however, was to come soon, for at the opening of the new palatial buildings of the Chambers of Mines,[1] Mr. Lionel Phillips, at that time the leading man of Johannesburg, made a speech in which he threw down the gauntlet to the Government in unmistakable terms. The members for Barberton and Johannesburg, who were present at the function, called on him next day and plainly informed him that if his speech was an indication of the line of action the Rand intended to pursue, all further friendly political intercourse between the two parties would be impossible.

Attempts were then made to rally those who wanted reforms, but by way of evolution, not

[1] November 20th, 1895.

revolution. This was no easy task, however, as the conduct of the Government had estranged many of its former best friends, and also because the gravity of the situation was not then fully realized.

Most of the Moderates were of opinion that the Government could not but benefit by the very plain speaking which was addressed to it in those days in unstinted measure; and that if it now received any support in Johannesburg, this would probably have the effect of hardening the heart of Pharaoh.

It was naturally the object of the Inner Circle to make the Reform Committee of which it formed the nucleus as cosmopolitan as possible; and by the aid of the system of half, three-quarter, and full confidences (the doses varying according to the condition of the patient) leading men of all nationalities were induced to join it, Americans, Frenchmen, Germans, even one solitary Hollander.

It is not for a moment suggested that these people were not in earnest in demanding reforms; every one of them was heart and soul in the movement. But as to their extent and the manner in which they should be obtained, there were many different and often absolutely antagonistic views.

CHAPTER XXIV.

WHY JAMESON CROSSED THE BORDER.

MANY answers have been given to the above question, all of which are to some extent hypothetical, since the chief actor in the drama has been very reticent on the subject.[1] The following account, however, comes from good authority, and certainly fits in with all the known facts.

Mr. Rhodes' attitude towards the seething discontent on the Rand can well be understood. The Transvaal Republic was the one great obstacle to the realization of the dream of his life—painting South Africa red from Cape Town to the Zambesi, and beyond. Then he had measured swords with Mr. Kruger on more than one occasion, notably over

[1] The evidence given by Dr. Jameson before the South African Committee on March 26th, 1897, hardly satisfies those who knew him best, and who feel that he must have had stronger reasons than those stated by him for an action so much in conflict with his instructions. He is not the man to be lightly suspected of "taking the bit between his teeth and bolting," without adequate cause.

the "Rooigrond" matter,[1] and a sentiment of personal antagonism had arisen between them. Antitypes as they were—the uneducated Boer and the Oxford graduate—they had one quality in common, their love of power, their impatience of rivalry. Limitless as was the veld,

[1] This incident, which at one time assumed a most serious complexion, arose as follows. Soon after the Retrocession of 1881, several native tribes, just beyond the south-western border of the Transvaal Republic, were at open warfare, and not much to the credit of the Caucasian, a number of whites assisted them. As was to be anticipated, British subjects took one side of the quarrel, while Boers assisted the other. The tribe which was aided by the Dutch prevailed, and the Boers received a strip of territory which had been promised to them by the natives in case of success. They parcelled it out in farms, and established on it two tiny Republics, which they called Stellaland and Goshen, which they hoped would ultimately be absorbed by the Transvaal. Mr. Kruger was prepared to accede to their wishes, when England intervened, and in 1884 sent up an expedition, under Sir Charles Warren, to prevent any extension of the Transvaal Republic in this direction. Matters looked very serious at one period, and both Mr. Kruger and Mr. Rhodes, who had been appointed "Deputy Commissioner of Bechuanaland" by the High Commissioner, and as such represented the British interests in this locality, hurried to the spot of danger. After negotiations of a decidedly acrimonious nature, the two small Republics were snuffed out, and many of their former citizens, known as "Rooigrond (Redground) Volunteers," lost the farms they had been promised. Mr. Kruger was very indignant at the treatment meted out to his *protégés*, nor was Mr. Rhodes altogether satisfied with the settlement.

there was not room for both these men in South Africa.

And then Mr. Rhodes sympathized with the British Uitlander with every fibre of his body. The personification of the "Civis Romanus Sum" idea in its most assertive aspect, he felt it as a personal degradation that people of his race should be subject to the rule of the Boer.

When once, therefore, Rhodes had ascertained, by the mission of Doctor Jameson to Johannesburg, that the discontent there was real and deep-seated, he was prepared to make great sacrifices, to run great risks.

The net of the conspiracy was therefore extended from Johannesburg to Cape Town. Men high in authority were sounded, with satisfactory results. True, the High Commissioner could not be approached—that would not have been possible; the less so as Sir Henry Loch had been succeeded by Lord Rosmead; but no doubt the latter would fall into line when he had to face accomplished facts.

England, it was argued, could hardly desert her children, or ignore their appeals in the time of need. Intervention would come, that was certain; but there would be an uncomfortable interval to tide over. How could Johannesburg be expected to hold its own until help came? Even the For-

wards shrank from such a risk, and insisted on outside support.

Rhodes offered it. He would send his men from the North at the first sign; he would have them ready at the border even, on some pretext or another. He had sounded Downing Street, or, at least, some of its people. There things were as one could wish them. Of course, one could not expect definite promises; there was danger of repudiation in case of failure; but that was a risk to be faced. And how could there be failure? At all events, Rhodes had secured a "jumping-off" place, and there he would place Jameson and his men, ready to come when called, but not before.

In the meantime trouble had arisen in Johannesburg, in the very bosom of the Reform Committee. "Quot homines tot sententiæ," applied with peculiar force to a body consisting of such divergent units. Above all, there was the question of the Flag. Hitherto this had been tacitly ignored, but in a fateful hour the question cropped up, with disastrous results. Many of the members, probably the majority, led by the American members of the Reform Committee, would not hear of the Union Jack. They wanted reforms, better Government, perhaps their own;

one, at all events, in which they should have a voice; for that they were prepared to fight, if necessary. But they would not help to destroy the Republic, or even to oust the Boer from a share in the Government of his country. Were they not Republicans themselves?

So also spoke the Afrikanders who had joined the movement. On the other hand, Colonel Rhodes, the Bayard of the party, and those of the British section, declared that they would march under no banner except that of England. In post haste two prominent members of the Committee left for Cape Town to take counsel with Rhodes.

Here was a difficult and knotty position indeed! To drop the Union Jack, even temporarily, would have disastrous results. What hope of intervention then? Besides, that ran counter to all Rhodes' plans, and as a matter of personal feeling was not to be thought of. Thus there was dissension at the very moment when unity of purpose was most essential; and there was danger besides that Johannesburg would break away, and either come to terms with the Republican Government or start a movement of its own. Either way spelt failure to the schemes of Mr. Rhodes, hence the two messages despatched almost simultaneously: "I

cannot be expected to take the risks I do, except for the English Flag"; but to the confidential agent: "There must be no flotation[1] without me."

Meanwhile Jameson was on the border—fuming, straining at the leash. He was in no pleasant position. It was not easy to keep up the pretexts under which he camped where he was. The Boers would begin to suspect and prepare! Why all this delay?

This last news seemed to him too preposterous altogether. "Quarrel about the Flag" at such a juncture? Why, it might wreck everything! Rhodes, he saw clearly, could not decide: whichever course he adopted would lead to an impasse. But he, the Doctor, could settle the matter, could force Johannesburg to make up its mind, and *act*. So up with the Union Jack, and over the border!

Johannesburg, however, preferred to decide this question in its own way, and to its own liking. At the first meeting of the Reform Committee after the die had been cast and Johannesburg had declared itself in full rebellion,

[1] Stock Exchange jargon was used in all the confidential telegrams.

the Transvaal Vierkleur[1] was produced, and the members of the Committee of the Revolution solemnly swore allegiance to the Flag of the Republic.

[1] National Flag.

CHAPTER XXV.

REVOLUTION.

By this time the "man in the street" of Johannesburg was awakening to the fact that serious events were impending. Well as the secret had so far been kept by the forty or fifty members of the Committee, it was now necessary to take wider circles into their confidence, and the town became thoroughly alarmed. No one seemed to know what was to happen, and the air was full of the wildest rumours. No tale was too improbable to find ready credence. The result was all but a panic. The trains, which left Johannesburg for Natal and the Cape Colony, became crowded to an unheard-of extent; each married man decided to send away wife and children. For many hours these waited in the broiling sun, in the hopes of finding some small corner in what was often little better than a cattle truck. And many men also left, amongst whom were large numbers of British miners, chiefly from Cornwall. These

men have been called cowards; they do not merit that appellation. "Jack Cornishman" is not as a rule suspected of want of courage; but he had no grievance here—none, at all events, which he found unbearable. He had not been consulted in the matter, and he did not intend to take part in a struggle into which he was being dragged without his consent, and of which he might have to bear the brunt. Those that stayed afterwards joined the movement to a man. There was no withstanding the popular excitement and enthusiasm when the word went round that Jameson was on the road to the Rand, and the British Government close behind him.

Pretoria, too, became thoroughly alarmed. The Transvaal Government did not anticipate, nor did they fear, any general rising from what they believed to be an unarmed mob. Of Jameson's designs they had no inkling whatever. They did not believe, therefore, that Johannesburg would be insane enough to rebel; and, if it did, the riot (for it could be nothing worse) would easily be quelled.

But there were other dangers to be feared—most grave ones. Kruger had been warned by recent events of the temper of the British Government. The way in which it had dealt with the

Commandeering question and the Drifts incident had produced the impression that it would be only too glad to avail itself of any pretext for intervention. If riots therefore occurred in the streets of Johannesburg now—if British subjects were shot down by the Boer police—a most dangerous situation would arise, the consequences of which no one could foretell. Slowly, reluctantly, the conviction was forced upon the President that the time had arrived when concessions were unavoidable. The path was smoothed for him by the rally of the Moderate Party on the Rand. As previously stated, these people were content to stand aside while the Forwards played a game of bluff by which reforms as to taxation, administration, and the Franchise, might be extorted from the Government. But the Moderates were not going to let this attempt be carried into the region of grim reality, if they could prevent it. They believed also that the right moment for their intervention had arrived, and that they could now make their own terms for a settlement.

Thus, on the same evening on which Jameson made his eventful move, a series of deputations left Johannesburg for Pretoria to meet the President. They found the latter unexpectedly amenable to reason. Mr. Kruger, alive now to the

risks of the situation, was in a yielding mood. From early dawn on that Monday morning [1] people crowded in and out of the Presidency. Mr. Kruger had summoned the leading members of his Executive Council, and with them met deputation after deputation, each of which brought its own appeal. All alike attained their desires: the Government gave way all along the line. It was decided that a Government proclamation would immediately be issued reducing the duties on necessaries of life; the restrictions on the powers of the Johannesburg municipality would be cancelled; the use of the English language in the Rand courts and public offices would be legalized; and, most welcome of all, a session of the Volksraad would be called without delay to reconsider the Franchise terms, and to amend them in a liberal spirit.

Here was indeed a happy consummation! It looked as if peace and concord were to be restored to the land, and as if once again there would be a friendly hand-clasp between Boer and Briton.

Some of these reforms were embodied in a proclamation which was issued on the spot. Others were to be settled at an immediate Executive Meeting. The different deputations

[1] December 30th, 1895.

were asked to call at ten o'clock that morning for the text of the proclamations and bring them to a grateful Johannesburg.

They came at the appointed time, but were met with the news that Jameson and his armed force had crossed the border and entered the territory of the Republic. The proclamation which had been promulgated remained in force, of course; but they were told that this was not the time to consider the other matters, which would have to stand over until the invader had been dealt with.

CHAPTER XXVI.

DARK DAYS.

THE news of the Jameson invasion had an electrical effect on the Rand. A body of eighty Germans and Hollanders marched to the public offices, and offered their services to the representatives of the Government; and the hundred or two Dutch Burghers—mostly belonging to the poorer classes, and living in the suburb of Braamfontein—asked for arms[1]; but with these exceptions, the entire Johannesburg population declared themselves supporters of the Reform Committee, which now emerged from its seclusion, and assumed control of the town. Amongst the British section the wildest enthusiasm prevailed; and the excitement of the hour carried off their feet even those others who had hitherto refused to join in any demonstra-

[1] Both the offer and the request were refused; the President wanted nothing less in those days than a conflict in Johannesburg, and all the Government supporters were instructed to avoid any demonstrations, and to seclude themselves as much as possible.

tion inimical to the Republic. With feverish activity all Johannesburg enrolled itself into different corps, which were armed as far as the smuggled-in rifles permitted. Fortifications—of a kind—were thrown up, and the town soon presented the appearance of a camp. In every direction men could be seen who were being drilled by some ex-officer. The Reform Committee worked at fever pitch; meetings were called and addressed by its members in every quarter, to gain over any men that might still waver, and to steer the popular enthusiasm in the direction in which it was desired to guide it—that of the establishment by Johannesburg of its own Government. This step had indeed been already decided upon, and all details settled; the Proclamation creating it, and giving the names of those who were to be its heads, was actually in print —when, as a bolt from the blue, the most unexpected, the most overwhelming message imaginable reached Johannesburg: The British Government had repudiated Jameson. He had been ordered to turn back, and would be an outlaw if he persisted in his march!

This was indeed a terrible blow—all the more so, because it was so contrary to all anticipations and confident calculations. Was it possible to

believe that all the promises, or hints as strong as promises, were to go for naught? Was it credible that Mr. Rhodes should so have mistaken the situation, should so have lost his vaunted power of "squaring" men and situations, and that what was held to bring safety and salvation yesterday, was a danger and a curse to-day? Was it to be believed that the same British Government, prepared to go to war over the Drifts or because a few Englishmen had been commandeered to take part in the defence of the country in which they dwelt, would desert its subjects now and abandon them to the vengeance of the Boers? Impossible! Yet there was the unequivocal wording of Lord Rosmead's message to Doctor Jameson.[1]

The Reform Committee was in a terrible position. In order to establish confidence and stimulate enthusiasm, some of its members had misled Johannesburg as to the military resources they had at their command. The three or four thousand rifles, the few machine guns they actually

[1] "Her Majesty's Government entirely disapprove of your conduct in invading the Transvaal with armed force. Your action has been repudiated. You are ordered to retire at once from the country, and will be held personally responsible for the consequences of your unauthorized and most improper proceeding."

possessed, had been multiplied by six. Johannesburg, instead of being able to defend itself against all Boers in Christendom, for weeks and months, was defenceless against any serious attack. The Committee had counted so confidently on Jameson's bringing more arms, large cannon, trained men! How would Johannesburg fare now?

The first thing to do was to conceal the actual position as long as possible from the crowd. The second was to attempt to come to terms with the Transvaal Government. A deputation was sent to Pretoria for this purpose, and indeed met representatives of the Government; but nothing definite could be arranged. The Boer was not in a mood to parley at that moment.

In the meantime Jameson was coming nearer, and the necessity for deciding what attitude was to be adopted towards him became pressing. The Committee was in a most harassing position. Jameson had ignored the commands of Lord Rosmead to retrace his footsteps, and was therefore virtually in mutiny against his own Government. The one hope Johannesburg now had was in England; could they—dared they—make it impossible for the British Government to protect the people of the Rand by identifying them with one who was now an outlaw?

If Jameson should reach Johannesburg, it was decided to welcome and shelter him; on that point there could be no hesitation, whatever the consequences might be; but if he should find difficulties in forcing his way through the Boers, now rapidly gathering from all sides to stop and capture him, if he asked Johannesburg for assistance, what was to be done then?[1]

The Reformers state that no appeal for aid reached them. They have been condemned as cowards in the belief that it did, and that they refused to accede to it. But the epithet would have been undeserved even if Jameson's message had come into their hands. To refuse the assistance he asked for would have been humiliating and distressing in the extreme; but the imperative duty of the Committee was to Johannesburg, and they had no right to deprive it of its one hope of protection against the just anger of the Boers.

To charge these men with poltroonery is therefore rank calumny.

Johannesburg a coward? The story of the Imperial Light Horse has answered that question.

[1] A proclamation by H. E. the High Commissioner commanded all British subjects to abstain from countenancing or assisting Dr. Jameson in his unlawful proceedings. This was communicated to the Reform Committee by Sir Jacobus De Wet, the British Resident, on January 1st, 1896.

CHAPTER XXVII.

OPERA BOUFFE.

When, by the one wire fortunately left uncut, the Boer Government received the message that Jameson had invaded the Transvaal, its efforts were concentrated upon stopping his march and preventing his reaching Johannesburg; and in the meantime it was imperative that an outbreak there should be avoided, if that could possibly be done.

A "Peace Committee" was therefore appointed to take charge of the town. It consisted of the Mining Commissioner, the Commandant of Police, and myself as member for Johannesburg. Its instructions, received from the President direct, were characteristic—"While I am beating out the fire at the frontier, on no account let it burst out in Johannesburg."

The first step this Committee took was to withdraw the police from the town and intern them at the gaol—a strong place, almost a fort, and therefore safe from sudden attack. The Reformers

thereupon enrolled a Police Corps of their own, which was distinguished from the every-day citizen by a white badge on the arm. It patrolled the town, and maintained fair order. Had the Republican Police remained on duty, collisions would have been inevitable : in fact, they nearly arose as it was. A young Reformer, newly enrolled and armed to the teeth, celebrated the occasion by firing off his gun as he was riding through the streets. This was more than a Zarp,[1] who was passing by on his way from the gaol with a message to us, could stand, and the somewhat "elated" hero was promptly arrested and brought to us to be dealt with. This was done without any loss of time : the prisoner was put on his horse again, and told to go whither his whim took him. I am not sure that we did not apologize to him.

Meanwhile the Peace Committee established itself in the telegraph office (the only place except the gaol which could still be considered as in the hands of the Republic), where we were in direct touch with the Government. Communication between us and the gaol was kept up by means of a somewhat excitable lieutenant of police, who had friends everywhere, and was not likely to be

[1] Member of the Republic Police Force.

molested. This youngster also acted as a kind of adjutant, and at brief intervals burst into the room in which we were working to bring us the latest town news, generally quite unreliable. On one occasion he stormed in, more excited than ever. "A message from the Reform Committee; they want to borrow our Flag!" "Our Flag? what for?" was the question. "I do not know—probably they want to drag it through the dust!" "Absurd! but of course they cannot have it!"

If we had known that, as subsequently appeared, the Reformers wished for it with the object of swearing allegiance to it, we should no doubt have sent it.

Half an hour later the lieutenant rushed in again.

"They have proclaimed rebellion," he shouted; "they managed to get one of our flags after all, and have hoisted it at the Goldfields office [1] upside down!"

The Reformers apparently did not possess very exact notions as to the appearance of the banner to which they had just pledged their fealty.

To illustrate the paradoxical situation which existed in Johannesburg during those three

[1] The headquarters of the Reform Committee.

anxious days of Jameson's march, I may cite another incident.

"The Doctor"[1] was expected to arrive on Wednesday or Thursday at the latest. His march into town would naturally have caused tremendous excitement. At that time indeed, if at any period, Johannesburg was likely to lose its head, and indulge in excesses, with all their potential consequences. Obviously the first step suggested by caution was to close the canteens, which had been doing a roaring trade during that time. We therefore telephoned a proposal to that effect to the President, and received his assent. The difficulty was, however, how to carry the decree into execution. We had obtained the right to issue the order, but lacked the power to enforce it.

While we were still discussing the matter, a number of gentlemen asked to see us. They were headed by Mr. Hosken, a staunch teetotaller. He and his friends had come to make exactly the same suggestion. Unfortunately, in the course of discussion, the visitors stated that they were a deputation from the Reform Committee. That at once stopped the discussion. How could we—representing the Government—treat on friendly terms with rebels in arms?

[1] Jameson was often referred to by that name.

Reluctantly the deputation withdrew; but they had not left the building before they were overtaken by one of us, who made an appointment with their spokesman at the Rand Club. Half an hour later these two met. After a brief chat our member produced a paper which he thought might interest the other. It was taken, glanced through, and an eager question of whether it might be kept was carelessly assented to.

It was a duplicate of the order of the Transvaal Government to close the canteens, and within an hour the Rebel Police had on the strength of it shut up every drinking-bar in the town.

They had the power to act but not the right. It was a case of diplomatic accommodation!

CHAPTER XXVIII.

NIEUWE JAARS KOEKJES.[1]

On the Boers the Jameson invasion had the same consolidating effect it produced in Johannesburg. All, Government and Opposition, Krugerites and Progressives, had merged into "Burghers of the South African Republic."

On the struggle of the invaders to reach the Rand, their defeat and capture, it is not proposed to dwell in these chapters; they are a matter of history.

One remark may, however, be made; it is more than possible that but for the one telegraph wire—overlooked when all the others were cut—Jameson's force would have reached Johannesburg. For the Boer was totally unprepared. Not only had he no conception of what was about to happen, but his guns, his ammunition, were in a state for which General Joubert was severely and justly attacked when the Volksraad met.

[1] New Year's cakes.

On what would have happened if Jameson had reached the Rand it is useless to speculate. The probabilities are that Johannesburg, as a town, would have ceased to exist. For the Boer did not remain unready long. When a sufficient number had been hurried together to stop Jameson, the Government did not call for more; indeed, they did not want them. It was somewhat risky to have a large force not far from the town against which the Burghers were so bitterly incensed, and which was apparently in open rebellion; sufficiently so, at all events, to furnish a pretext for the Burghers of one or other district to get out of hand and try retaliation on their own account.

And still the Boers came in their thousands. Each man as he received the news sent flying messengers to his neighbours that "the Englishman had fallen on the land," and so word was passed on from farm to farm. All male occupants delayed only long enough to saddle their best horses, to get their guns and cartridges together, and to enable the housewife to fill bolster and saddle-bag with what food was ready—and then off to Pretoria to meet the foe!

Preparations were made in Pretoria for their reception. It was specially necessary to keep

them in good humour, so the Commissariat was the Government's first care ; no small one either, for it soon appeared that the men had brought nothing except "Nieuwe Jaars Koekjes." It was at the eve of the New Year, the festive season, for which large stores of cakes and tarts had been prepared. That was all the "Tanta"[1] had on hand ; so that went into the saddle-bags. It was good of its kind, no doubt, but seemed hardly sufficient to start a campaign on.

Well, the Boer had come ; and he stayed till he became a very serious embarrassment to the Government. The "Back Veld" party amongst them, and it was a large one, clamoured for two things. They wanted to see Jameson hanged ; and they asked for a chance of "taking it out of" Johannesburg, the town that had insulted the Republic and flouted it for so many years.

At no time of his life did Kruger shine to greater advantage. He was not used to the *rôle* of pacificator—it was generally the other way about—but here he exerted all his powers of persuasion, his strength of character, and he bent the masses to his will. Jameson and his men

[1] All middle-aged Boers and their wives are called by their friends Oom and Tanta (uncle and aunt).

were handed over to England to be dealt with as their conduct merited.

And now, how to deal with Johannesburg? Again the better way was chosen. The town was not to be punished; there was to be an amnesty to all except the Committee, and they were to be tried by the courts of the country. Only one other thing the Burghers exacted: permission to ride through the town in force; and when that was over a sigh of relief was breathed by all who had a friend in the place.

The Reform Committee was then arrested. Never, surely, before have prisoners been gathered in any gaol who represented so much intelligence, influence, and capital as those sixty-four men.[1] There was hardly a leading man of the Rand who was not among them.

The usual comic relief was supplied by Johannesburg's favourite Irish doctor. By some oversight his name had been omitted in the warrants. The little man was frantic. "It was an insult, an unpardonable affront! He had done as much as anybody else," he said, "and he was d——d sorry now he had not done more. He *would*, the first chance he got." He made himself such a

[1] The Committee had reached that number by additions during the first days of the rising.

nuisance to the authorities that, to get rid of him, they locked him up with the others.

At the beginning the conditions of their imprisonment, at all events as to food and cleanliness, certainly did not redound to the credit of the authorities. But they were not worse than, for instance, those of the Boer prisoners on the Catalania, at Simonstown, a few years later, though these also included many men of education and refinement. And they were soon improved; indeed, later on the restrictions became extremely lax. Several of the prisoners, for instance, obtained their meals direct from their Pretoria Club. From the first leave to visit them was not difficult to obtain, of which the fullest advantage was taken.[1] The Reformers congregated all day long in the large central square of the prison, which presented a most animated scene. In every direction you could see men receiving their relations, friends, or solicitors. Between these eager knots the others walked, or lounged on rugs and blankets, reading, writing, or killing time with cards and chess. The

[1] In the early days of "short commons," smuggling in provisions became a fine art. As an instance, the wife of a leading financial magnate, when visiting her nephew, now one of the chief pillars of the English turf, brought concealed under her coat a string of sausages, long and substantial enough to victual a garrison.

favourite game, however, was that of marbles. It was a strange sight to see middle-aged men, whose daily occupation had been a game in which the counters consisted of many thousands of pounds, eagerly contending for the possession of a few round stones of the value of a shilling or so to the dozen. And it was remarkable too, as an illustration of the fallacy of the popular impression that the acquisition of wealth is "all luck," that it was the big capitalists who held all the marbles when the doors of their prison opened.

Then the Reformers were tried, with what results we know. Again Kruger exerted himself to get the death sentence of the ringleaders commuted. It was risky business for him; he might have been held responsible by his own people. He therefore insisted that the reprieve should be granted by the unanimous decision of the full Executive Council. He succeeded in obtaining this, but only after desperate efforts, and by exerting his persuasive powers to the utmost. Nothing can be finer or more dexterous than his retort when he was reminded by one of the members of Slachter's Neck.[1]

[1] A most tragic episode in the old colony, one of the chief causes of the Dutch Trek, and which has rankled in the memory of the Boers ever since.

"Slachter's Neck!" he cried, "where they hung our people! Slachter's Neck! Has not that been the cause of all the bloodshed for the last eighty years?"

"Yes, President, and that is why we should remember it!"

"Yes, remember it, indeed! You know all that has happened, and yet you want me to start another Slachter's Neck now?"

Lord Rosmead hurried to the Transvaal. His presence there at this crisis no doubt did much to smooth matters, but it is to President Kruger that the honours of that time should be adjudged.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE BEGINNING OF THE END.

And so our bits of china had to be picked up and patched together again in the best way we could.

It was a heart-breaking task. All progress made towards unity and fraternization had been swept away as by a tidal wave, which had left behind it a wrack of bitter humiliation on the one side, and deep distrust on the other.

Yet all might still have been well if the Transvaal Government and the Rand had been given the opportunity of adjusting themselves to the new position without interference from other quarters. Naturally, there was a reaction at first, and the retrogressive Boer for a time held the reins. Several oppressive measures were enacted at this juncture, such as a stringent Press Law, an "Undesirable Immigration" Act, and a law prohibiting public meetings, but they were soon either withdrawn or held in abeyance. The Boer could

no longer be in doubt as to the strength and reality of the movement at the Rand; and the President had admitted by the concessions he promised, on the eve of the Jameson Raid, that reforms were called for, and could be given. On this foundation a bridge between the Burgher and the Uitlander might have been built—in time; but time was not to be given.

It soon became evident that this new *débâcle*, following on Laing's Neck and Majuba, was looked upon in England as too great a humiliation to be borne with equanimity; and this feeling of unbearable disgrace was fanned into wild passion by the ill-considered telegram of the German Emperor, a message which brought greater harm to those to whom it was addressed than aught else adverse fate could have sent them.

It was clear as the sunshine on our hills that England would not miss another opportunity to wipe out the past. That, at all events, is what the Boer believed; and that belief was a large factor in bringing about the inevitable.

This belief was strengthened into conviction by the result of the Jameson inquiry. Mr. Rhodes' reception in England after he had fallen in South Africa, the scant punishment of the invaders—all that went for something; but the coping-stone

was placed on the arch of distrust when the "inquiry" ended in fiasco.

To this day it is not understood in South Africa how that melancholy breakdown was possible; how, at the very eve of disclosure, at the moment when Mr. Hawksley was about to produce the telegrams which would have settled the question of responsibility, at that eleventh all-important hour, a veil was drawn over the picture, and the inquiry came to a futile end.

To this day no one can fathom how the Liberal Party, so strongly represented on the Inquiry Committee, not only permitted but joined in so questionable and so un-English a course.

That after that, Mr. Rhodes, condemned by the report of the Committee, was in almost the same breath rehabilitated by the Colonial Secretary who had signed it, was a minor matter.

To make matters worse, the Rand, glad enough to take advantage of the position, now addressed its complaints and appeals for reforms, not to the Government of the country, but to Downing Street, and to Her Majesty the Queen. And so the estrangement became complete.

Every month the relations between England and the Republic became more strained. Immediately after the raid Mr. Kruger was asked

by the British Government to come on a visit to London, but the invitation was refused as it was accompanied by a list of subjects to be discussed on that occasion which contained several matters in which the Transvaal declined England's intervention. For it soon appeared that Mr. Chamberlain claimed the right of interference in all internal affairs of the Transvaal, as soon as they affected or touched British subjects. If this claim had been conceded, the authority of the Boer Government would have become a mere shadow. The most Progressive Boer even—the very men who were striving for reforms to the utmost of their ability, and at no small personal risk—indignantly resented dictation from London in these matters; indeed, several reforms were delayed simply because they were pressed for by the English Government. The despatches at that period chiefly consisted on the one side of British demands for relief of grievances alleged by the people of the Rand, by British Indians who had swarmed into the country from Natal and elsewhere, and even by Malay cab-drivers from Capetown, who objected to the municipal regulations of Johannesburg, framed though they chiefly were by the elected representatives of that town; and, on the other, of sullen denials by Mr. Kruger's

Government of England's right to intervene in the domestic concerns of the Republic. The burning question, however, for reasons already stated, was and remained that of the Franchise. Here at first both President and the majority of the Raad refused all concessions; but their opposition was gradually worn down by pressure from within and without, to which urgent advice from their friends in the Free State and the Cape Colony lent additional weight. At one time there seemed to be some hope of an amicable arrangement of the differences between the two governments. Friends of peace, both in England and at the Cape, made strenuous endeavours to bring about a meeting between Lord Milner and Mr. Kruger. These efforts were successful. The Conference was held at the end of May, 1899, in Bloemfontein.

At this meeting also, the battle chiefly raged round the question of Franchise. This subject was not a happy one to select as a basis of British demands, but the English Government had little choice in the matter. While it felt, in the abstract, that its subjects were not dealt with fairly or justly by the Republic (that they were "treated as helots" was the favourite phrase in speeches and despatches), it was found in the concrete somewhat difficult to discover a single

grievance which would give the British Government (even on the assumption of the existence of suzerainty) a legitimate cause for interference. Taxes—or rather import duties—were high, but not higher than in the neighbouring British Colonies. Concessions and monopolies placed a heavy burden on the inhabitants of the Transvaal; but they were not unknown in European countries which were in the forefront of civilization, such as France. The dynamite concession increased the cost of production at the mines, but even with this disadvantage, not a Company on the Rand would have cared to exchange the Gold law of the Republic for that, for instance, of Rhodesia, or indeed of any other country in the world. The treatment of the coloured people, especially that of the Malays from the Cape Colony and of British Indians, seemed at first sight a promising subject; they were not allowed to hold fixed property, had no civic rights, were not even permitted to use the side-walks of Pretoria and Johannesburg. But unfortunately in this matter the whole of the British population of the Rand heartily and emphatically endorsed the action of the Republican authorities.[1] Insecurity of life and property on

[1] The same restrictions remain under the British Flag in the Transvaal to-day.

the fields (how much safer then than in these days of 1906!) appeared to be a sound basis of remonstrance, especially when it culminated in the "brutal murder" of an Englishman by a Republican policeman; but that also proved delusive, since, when the policeman was brought to trial, the evidence showed that he had acted in self-defence, as he was seriously threatened by the deceased (a man called Edgar), whom he was arresting for having committed a grave assault; worse still, the policeman, instead of being a Dutchman bearing the name of Van Jaarsveld or De Bruin (as surely under the circumstances might have been expected of him!), turned out to be of English blood, and was actually called Jones.[1]

So one by one, on closer examination, the causes for interference failed, and the English Government had to fall back on the question of the Franchise. As has been shown already, this was a very pertinent and serious grievance on the part of all the inhabitants of the fields—*except the Britishers;* and it became an absolutely paradoxical demand when it emanated from the British Government, for it amounted to this, that England proposed to use the utmost pressure—to

[1] He claimed to be grandson of a coachman to H.M. Queen Victoria.

the extent even of armed interference—in order to obtain for British subjects the right to cease to be such, and become strangers to the Empire! Serio-comic as the relations between governments in South Africa have often been, this surely was the climax of anomaly.

At the Conference Mr. Kruger made very large concessions, but they were conditional upon the acceptance by England of the principle of arbitration to settle future differences; and they did not quite reach the "irreducible minimum" demanded by the High Commissioner. The Conference therefore failed.

At this time an assertion became prominent, on the platform and in the press, which had indeed been mooted before, but which now met with ready belief, and later on grew into almost a cult. It was: That the Boer wanted to wrest South Africa from the British Empire, "to drive the English into the sea."

In the whole campaign of calumny and misrepresentation, prosecuted by those who wanted war at any price (a campaign in which the English people were the victims as often as the Boers), no accusation has had such far-reaching and calamitous consequences as this baseless charge.

Preposterous, absurd beyond laughter, as it was to those who knew the Dutch, no other statement found such general credence amongst those who did not. To-day even, people can be found who still believe in it. Yet nothing can be more certain than that it is devoid of all foundation.

True, the Transvaal armed to the teeth; but in defence, not defiance; inspired by dread of invasion, not desire of conquest. As well might it be said that the new forts at Pretoria were a menace to Capetown or Durban! Mr. Kruger's "Ultimatum," and the fact that the Republics commenced hostilities when their forces crossed the border, have been quoted as proof conclusive that a war of aggression had been determined upon by the Boers. Surely they are nothing of the kind, if the circumstances are considered. After the failure of the Bloemfontein Conference negotiations were continued, and on August 31st Mr. Chamberlain suggested a joint Commission to report upon the Franchise reforms which had been passed by the Volksraad in the previous month. Mr. Kruger made an alternative proposal, but, when this led to no agreement, accepted, on September 2nd, the suggestion of a joint Commission. This offer Mr. Chamberlain, however,

withdrew, and he informed the President on September 22nd, 1899, "that Her Majesty's Government were now compelled to consider the situation afresh, and to formulate their own proposals for a final settlement of the issues which had been created in South Africa by the policy constantly followed for many years by the Government of the South African Republic. They would communicate the result of their deliberations in a later dispatch." From this intimation it was clear that additional demands were about to be made by England beyond those which had already been refused by the Boers and which were therefore certain to be unacceptable. In the meantime British troops were hurried up from all sides. Those in South Africa were concentrated near the Free State and Transvaal borders, and many thousands of soldiers from England, India, and elsewhere were on the water and would land in a few weeks.

Moreover, on the same September 22nd, the British Government decided to mobilize an Army Corps for service in South Africa, and early in October offers of contingents from the colonies were accepted. Finally, on October 7th, two Royal Proclamations were issued summoning Parliament and calling out a portion of the first class Army Reserve, which

were followed by the mobilization of the South African Field Force.

Under these circumstances, the Boers could adopt one course only, unless they were prepared to surrender at discretion and abandon all intention of armed resistance to the invasion of the Republics. To wait until the British Government had formulated its new demands, and in the meantime marshalled its armies in array on the frontiers of the Republic, would have been the rankest folly. Desperate as the chances of the Boers appeared when pitted against the British Empire, they would have become absolutely hopeless if further time had been lost. The ultimatum issued by the President on October 9th, which intimated that any further movement of British troops towards the Republic would be regarded as a declaration of war, was therefore surely one which was forced upon him, and to interpret this action as one of provocation is sheer hypocrisy.

Kruger want South Africa! No consideration that could have been offered to him would have induced him to accept it. I can imagine his reply, if, let us say, Kimberley had been presented to him. "What!" he would have shouted, "accept that place, with all the English in it!

Haven't I got a big enough load on my shoulders already in Johannesburg?"

Yes, if years ago the Boer could have got the North—Matabele Land with its wide and fertile plains—to parcel out in farms for his sons; or if he could have got Delagoa Bay,[1] Danaean gift as it would have been. But to accept territory on which Englishmen lived, to increase the number of those who would outvote the Burgher and wrest the government of his own country from him? The Boer would have looked upon such a step as unspeakable folly.

And as to the Dutch elsewhere? Let the simple question be put to anyone who knows the Dutch in the Cape Colony, what the result would have been if, before the Raid, those of Dutch descent in that Colony had been free to choose by plebiscite between the Government of Cape Colony and Mr. Kruger's rule. It is to be doubted whether Mr. Kruger would have got a hundred votes.

Those who have charged Mr. Kruger with aspirations to found a Dutch Republic, which was

[1] Pretorius had proclaimed it as belonging to the Republic in 1868, but England intervened, and by the subsequent MacMahon arbitration it was awarded to Portugal.

to embrace all South Africa, could not but realize themselves how their assertions were contradicted by all the facts; and to support their theory, they created the legend of a general Dutch conspiracy. As "proof" of their contention they pointed to the fact that the Orange Free State came to the aid of the Transvaal as soon as hostilities commenced, and to the subsequent rebellion of some eight thousand Dutch in the Cape Colony.

As to the first—what else could possibly have been expected from the Free State? It is indeed a marvel to find that leading British statesmen should at any time have hoped that they would have to deal with the Transvaal single-handed.[1] To begin with, the Free State was pledged in

[1] On November 28th, 1899, Mr. Arthur Balfour, in a speech at Dewsbury, made the following statement:—

"I now believe this—that the declaration of war by the Transvaal Government and the Orange Free State was not any despairing struggle for liberty but a bold bid for empire. I now believe that it was not to preserve what they had, but to get what they had not, that they went to war. I now believe that nothing less than to make themselves—these two Republics as a nucleus and what additions they could obtain to them—the centre of a Dutch-speaking paramount Power in South Africa, and to exclude for ever the hated Britisher from any dominating influence in the future of that part of the world—that is the only explanation which fits the facts; that is the only explanation which, amongst other things, makes the policy of the Orange Free State credible."

honour to assist the Transvaal Republic, if solemn compacts of alliance are to be held of the slightest value. Since March, 1889, a treaty had existed between the two Republics, which, *inter alia*, bound each State to help the other whenever the independence of one of the two should be assailed from without; this pledge was reaffirmed by the treaty of April, 1897, which was published soon after it was entered into. In it the two Republics again bound themselves to come to each other's aid if the independence of either was attacked "unless the State called upon for assistance could prove that the other was in the wrong." On this latter point the resolution passed by the Volksraad of the Orange Free State on September 27th, 1899, was surely explicit. It read—"That in the opinion of the Raad there exists no cause for war, and if war is now begun or occasioned by H.M. Government against the South African Republic this will be morally a war against the whole of the white population of South Africa, and will in its results be calamitous and criminal; and further, that the Orange Free State will honestly and faithfully perform its obligations towards the South African Republic, arising out of the political alliance between the two Republics, whatever may happen."

But even if this treaty had never existed, and this declaration had never been made, there still could have been no doubt as to the attitude of the Free State. In 1880, when the Transvaal Boers were at war with the British Empire, President Brand, in spite of strenuous endeavours, could not prevent hundreds of his Burghers from crossing the river and joining the Transvaal forces; and one of the reasons why England concluded the 1881 peace was the certainty that if hostilities continued, the whole of the Free State would have risen as one man, and a situation have been created with which the British forces on the spot would have been quite unable to deal.[1] What then

[1] Lord Kimberley, speaking at Newcastle in November, 1899, said:—"It was perfectly natural that there should be in the minds of many men the idea that the real origin and cause of the present unhappy state of things in South Africa was the Convention of 1881, for which he and the Government of the day were responsible. So far as he was concerned, and to a great extent Mr. Gladstone, their reason was not, as some people thought, a mere sentimental reason. They found themselves in this position: the Free State was then very friendly. There was at its head President Brand —as good a friend of ours as any man in South Africa. President Brand used his utmost influence with the people of the Free State to keep them back from joining the Transvaal Republic in the event of the war going on. At last Mr. Brand sent a message in which he said he had done his utmost, that he had gone to the end of his tether, and could not hold his Burghers in any more, and that if England

could be more certain than that the Free State Boer would also join in this war? He had no quarrel of his own with England, but he espoused the cause of his brother across the Vaal as keenly as the latter did; indeed, the division between the two was wholly an artificial and accidental one. Both Republics were founded by the same Voortrekkers; they were connected by every possible tie; many Burghers had farms in both; often the father resided on one side of the Vaal, while his sons lived just across it on the other. The two Republics had been on the point of merging into one on half-a-dozen occasions—in fact, this consummation was prevented only by the personal rivalries of their leaders. Once indeed they had elected the same President (Mr. M. W. Pretorius). They were "one and indivisible" in sympathy and interests if they were not in name and in the accidents of legislation.

The Free State had, however, much stronger

went on she would have the Free State against her. More than that, the Government had plain indications from the Colony itself that there was sympathy there which might give rise to an extreme and serious difficulty; and the conclusion they came to, whether it was wise or not, was that, painful to the last degree as it was for them to make peace under such circumstances, they were taking the right course to avert the calamity they saw impending."

reason still not to let the Transvaal stand alone—that of self-preservation; for it was the firm conviction of its Burghers that, if the Transvaal lost its independence, their own would not have been worth a year's purchase.

That their heart was in the cause we know. The war has produced no stauncher fighters than Christian De Wet—the simple farmer who discovered himself to be as able and as successful as any guerilla chief in history—and Marthinus Theunis Steyn, the former President of the Free State, whose courage and ardour an all but mortal illness even could not quench.

Now as to the evidence in connection with the alleged conspiracy of the Dutch in Cape Colony. It may be summed up in a sentence as brief as the proverbial chapter on snakes in Ireland, and for the same reason—that it does not exist. At all events, not the smallest trace of it was produced in all the hundreds of high treason cases brought to trial in that colony.

There is moreover conclusive proof to the contrary. True, some eight thousand British subjects of Dutch blood joined the forces of the Republic who invaded the Cape Colony, but is that a matter for surprise? Reverse the position. When hostilities commenced, did not many of the

Burghers of the Transvaal, who were of British descent, join the English forces? How could the Cape Dutch be expected to remain proof against the call of blood, when the victorious Republican commandos overran the "Old Colony"? We have seen how a wave of popular excitement affected even those men in Johannesburg who had no desire to uproot the Republican Government; in the same way the Dutch, under the British Flag, were carried off their feet when those of their own race appealed to them. But none rose until they were so tempted. They all had arms; they were not wanting in courage; in many cases whole districts were absolutely at their mercy; yet in almost all instances they forgot the allegiance they owed to England only when temptation came to their very door.

As a matter of fact, the Republics did not expect any active help from them—and at the time *did not wish for it.* What they did anticipate was that the Cape Colony would remain neutral. It was a vain—an impossible—hope. Yet the Republican leaders entertained it, and acted on it, to the great if not fatal detriment of their cause. They believed that since the Government of the Cape was kept in power by Dutch votes, the influence of the latter would be strong enough

to prevent the Colony from being made a quarter from which the Republics would be attacked. The railways, they argued, belong to the Cape Colony—surely their friends and sympathizers there could prevent their being used against them? Surely those of their blood, who then controlled the Government there, would compel or induce England to let the Cape Colony stand out of the quarrel? This expectation received some support from a public speech of the Prime Minister, Mr. W. P. Schreiner, in which he expressed the hope that the Cape Colony would not be touched by the war. At any rate, mad as the dream seems, the Boers acted on it. No doubt the wish was to some degree father to the thought. It would naturally have been of the utmost advantage to them if the theatre of military operations could have been confined to Natal. The country there rises from the coast in successive mountain terraces, each of which would—as indeed appeared later—form splendid lines of defence. If all Republican forces, therefore, could have been concentrated there, an enemy far outnumbering them might well have been held at bay for an unlimited period. If it had been possible to keep the rear safe, if there was to be no danger of attack from any other quarter, much would have

been gained. This was what the Boers hoped for, and for that reason they refrained for weeks from invading the Cape Colony. True, they attacked Kimberley, but that town they always looked upon as altogether apart from the Cape, as indeed it had been for many years; besides, their arch-enemy Rhodes had gone there, which was tantamount to a direct challenge. But at Aliwal North and elsewhere they would not cross the border till they found that their expectation of being safe in that direction was a delusion. It is difficult to exaggerate what they lost by their hesitation. Conceivably the whole history of South Africa would be different to-day, but for this delay. If the Republican forces had reached Capetown (as indeed at one time Capetown feared they would); if they had received the accession of strength they would then have obtained, the task of re-conquering so vast and so difficult a country (think of the Hex River Mountains only!) might well have been beyond the strength of even England.

One point is clear, however—this hope and desire of the neutrality of a British Colony, preposterous as it may now seem, is at all events entirely incompatible with the assertions of those who talked so glibly of a "Conspiracy of all the Dutch" in South Africa.

So much for a war of conquest by the Boer!

Still, as we have seen, England was cozened into the belief that such designs were fostered, and that their execution was being prepared for by the Boers.

What hope then could there be of maintaining peace, when both sides to the quarrel held the conviction that its opponent was only awaiting a favourable opportunity for commencing hostilities?

And so War came!

CHAPTER XXX.

THE THREE YEARS' WAR.

We have followed the events and incidents, the conflicts of interests and aspirations, and the vehement passions created by them, which together inevitably, inexorably, led to the last great struggle between Great Britain and the two Republics. But that war itself is not within the scope of this volume. It is too recent—its theatre is too vast—to permit as yet of the bird's-eye view which it has been the object of these pages to obtain. The misery, the bitterness, are too fresh to make impartial comment possible. On it many books have been written, but all of them (save when they confine themselves to technical description) by pens which were steeped in the spirit of the partisan. Moreover, the deep wounds the war has left cannot be expected to have healed, as yet; and any careless or unsympathetic touch of them, which in an attempt to consider all the phases of the struggle it would be well-nigh impossible to

avoid, would only deepen their pain and retard their recovery.

It is not too early, however, to draw from the history of the war consolations which go far to compensate for the untold suffering it has caused, and to extract from it lessons as to the future. For both these will be of aid in the great task of reconciliation which should now be the aim of all who love South Africa.

The first great compensating advantage, of value beyond computation, is that at last the Briton and Boer have learned to respect each other. It was a lesson not easily taught—for through the history of South Africa of the last thirty-five years runs an undercurrent of contempt, of wilful blindness, and of misrepresentation, which could be stopped only when the two conflicting races met face to face, and found each other to be brave enemies. At variance as they still may be—must be—as to the rights and wrongs of the quarrel, they can no longer question the sincerity of each other's motives. After all, no man can give better proof of the faith that is in him than to lay down his life for it.[1]

[1] The strength of the spirit of patriotism, which animated both sides in this war, is best shown by the self-sacrifice of the women of the Empire and of the Republics, who

In this way the long duration of the war has been of special advantage to England. It forced its lessons home on so large a number of combatants that they impressed themselves on the whole of the British nation. Not only the regular army, the greater portion of which took part in the war, but the many thousands of Volunteers which flocked to England's standard from Great Britain itself and its Colonies, had thus the opportunity of discovering the fine qualities of their adversaries—opportunities which many years of peaceful intercourse would not have afforded. The result is that the Britisher now

bravely sent those they held dearest to fight for flag and country. The finest instance of all, perhaps, comes from the Johannesburg suburb of Braamfontein—locally known as "Veldschoendorp." As its name indicates (the village of Veldschoens, which are the home-made boots worn by the Boers) it is inhabited almost exclusively by Dutch, nearly all of them of the poorest classes. When hostilities commenced, all the men went to the front of course. They left their families in the most precarious condition—in many cases entirely dependent upon charity. The women accompanied the Burghers to the station, where they were to be entrained, and, as a last service, carried their guns and bandoliers. Then these were handed to the men—and then came the parting. But there was no flinching or wailing, no appeals to the men to take care of themselves, to remember that they were the breadwinners, and that if they fell their children would starve. Just these simple words:—"Manne, doet julle plicht." "Men, do your duty!"

regards not only with pride, but with a certain sentiment of affection, the men who have become his fellow members of the Empire. This feeling of respect and liking permeated all ranks, on both sides. What better instance of it can be given than that at the end of the war the Boer leaders expressed the desire that Lord Kitchener, the general by whom they had been vanquished, should be sent to rule them?

It may be safely said that almost all the British officers who were fighting against the Boer, however prejudiced they might at first have been, learned to like him in the end. In more than one case—for instance, that of General de la Rey and Lord Methuen—this regard has ripened into friendship. And Tommy Atkins, in the intervals between fighting, liked the Boer almost from the first. This was largely due to the latter's democratic habits, which make him regard all men as equals—that is, white men, of course, for in his relations with the natives he is an aristocrat of aristocrats. So when the Burgher met the "Rednecks" as he calls them, during peaceful interludes, his first act, whether he was prisoner or captor, was to shake hands with Tommy; the next, to offer him a smoke. Mr. Atkins was not used to being so treated, and highly appreciated it; this

feeling was soon reciprocated, and had as its outcome countless acts of kindness to prisoners and wounded, on both sides; though of course it did not make either of them fight with any the less determination. To recognize how wholesome this revulsion of opinion is, one has only to remember with what feelings the average Englishman regarded the Boer before the war and during its earlier stages; and as to the British soldier—he arrived in South Africa filled with stories about the Boer's cruelty and treachery; most of them, indeed, were surprised to find that he was not black.[1]

[1] Some of these extraordinary views were held also by other classes in England. A story is told of an English lady who while on a "circular tour" arrived at Durban just when the first batch of Boer prisoners (mostly Pretorians) were being shipped to Capetown. The visitor was most anxious to get a good look at them. The arrangements were not very satisfactory, and at one time—just as the lady arrived on the scene—prisoners, guards, and spectators all but mingled. The lady implored all and sundry to show her where the Boers were. She had been standing almost shoulder to shoulder with them, but when they were pointed out to her she turned round, raised her lorgnette, and, after a long stare, exclaimed, "Dear me! What ferocious-looking creatures!"

The incident proved of some value later on, when the same prisoners found themselves in Green Point Camp. They were pretty crowded, and it was essential to the general comfort that all should keep their patience and temper—so when any Burgher was in danger of losing the latter, all his comrades about him turned towards him, raised imaginary

That the war had the same beneficial effects on the Boer's views we have already seen; in his case there were less violent prejudices to overcome; still, he believed the average officer to be an effeminate, helpless individual, and looked upon Tommy Atkins as a mere fighting machine, without either heart or conscience; so the awaking to the real facts was pleasant enough in his case too. With the Burghers of course every one went to the front, from greyheads of seventy down to lads of fifteen, or sometimes even younger, such as the sons of Generals de la Rey and Botha, the latter of whom was only fourteen at the end of the campaign in which he had taken part all through. These youngsters soon got used to the game, and carried themselves as bravely as any of the men. One lad, barely in his teens, was sent off by his old invalided father with these last words of advice: "Of the Rednecks, Jannie,[1] of the Englishmen, you must not be afraid. An Englishman is just like a lion. He roars, and he threatens, and he rushes—and then he stops.[2] And then he roars, and he rushes, and he stops again. Don't you be

lorgnettes, and with united voices repeated the words quoted above. They worked like a charm.

[1] Diminutive for John.

[2] Referring to the successive rushes of British infantry when attacking.

afraid of him, Jannie ! Just wait till you can see the white of his eye, and then shoot him—shoot him dead ! "

Jannie, all ear, but still perturbed, permitted himself a question :

" But, father, suppose I miss him ? "

" Well, Jannie, if you miss him, of course, if you miss him, well, Jannie, then you will have to make another plan."

Poor little Jannie !

Of supreme importance, however, is the fact that the long drawn out struggle between Boer and Britain in South Africa is over—finally, and for ever. Of this there can be no doubt ; to question it would be an insult to the character of the Boer. Nothing has more surprised those that know him best than the determination, at one time held by England, to obtain, at all costs, " unconditional surrender." It is, indeed, a matter for congratulation that the war did not end in that way, for, if so, the peace would not have been of long duration, since the Boer would not have looked upon it as morally binding upon him in any way. But to the treaty of Vereeniging he is pledged in conscience and honour, and he would look upon a breach of its terms as a sin which would carry with it certain punishment from Above. This conviction was

strongly put by General de la Rey in answer to a friend who saw the Generals[1] during their visit to London soon after the war, and who bluntly asked them whether they looked upon the peace as finally settling the question which had been at such bitter issue, or as only an armistice to enable them to regain strength. Mr. de la Rey, with some indignation, answered: "We thought you knew us! We have, as you know, purchased the peace; the price we have undertaken to give for it is our independence, and as honest men we will pay it to the last penny."

England does well to trust the Boer; he would look upon himself as forsworn should he betray that confidence.

[1] Botha, De Wet, and De la Rey.

CHAPTER XXXI.

THE FUTURE OF THE TRANSVAAL.

"NEVER prophesy unless you know," is the tritest of warnings, and carries with it its own refutation; for if it were observed, who would be able to prophesy at all? Yet it is necessary, if the best course is to be found in which to direct the destinies and to shape the policy of a country, that an intelligent forecast should be made of events to come, and that the lessons of the past be applied as a guide to the future.

The prosperity of the Transvaal, from an industrial and agricultural point of view, is assured. It rests on the success of the mining industry, as to the future of which there can be no shade of doubt. The Witwatersrand is not only the largest goldfield in the world, with a yield exceeding by far the output of any other mining centre, but it belongs to the rare class of mining ventures in which the speculative element has been largely eliminated, and which, for stability

of returns, compare favourably with industrial undertakings. It is safe to say that Rand mining properties are more reliable investments than, for instance, railways, whose returns are largely affected by the vicissitudes of the weather, and the results of crops; and that they are more certain of profits than manufacturing ventures, since they are not subject to the vagaries of the laws of supply and demand. Gold is always sure of a market; and it has been so evenly distributed in the Rand reefs and leaders, that the returns they will yield can be calculated with almost mathematical precision. Improved methods both of mining and extraction are bringing with them a continual reduction of the cost of production, while the total output is establishing new records almost every month.

The soundness and stability of the Rand goldfields as an industry are unaffected by the oscillations of the Stock Exchange, where, in times of "boom," the shares of individual mines are often sent up to prices which are not justified by prospective profits, while in times of depression they fall far below their intrinsic value. But whether the "market" be flourishing or drooping, the industry itself continues on its way of steady progress. Two considerations only can affect it

adversely, lack of labour, and difficulty in finding capital for the development of mining at lower depths, in the so-called "deep levels." As to the former, the opinion of those who held from the first that a sufficient or, at all events, a much larger supply of unskilled labour could be obtained in South Africa itself seems to be gaining ground. Should that view prove to be well founded, the number of Chinese on the Rand will be gradually reduced, until it becomes evident that the local centres of supply have been exhausted. In that case a *modus vivendi* will doubtlessly be arrived at. Even the strongest opponents to Chinese labour in South Africa will consent to limited foreign supply, if the prosperity of the goldfields should depend upon its continuance, with this one imperative proviso, that the Chinese shall in no case be allowed to settle permanently in South Africa. Happily, the decision of this issue is now vested in the Transvaal legislature. As to the second, since it has been proved beyond any doubt, that the mines can be worked with profit at great depths, the attraction of capital for purpose of development can be only a question of time.

With so magnificent and so permanent a market as the goldfields in its midst, agriculture in the Transvaal should have bright prospects—if it is

fairly treated. For, as we have already seen, its conditions are such that it is unable to compete with imported agricultural products. It therefore has an undeniable right to protection. The extent to which this claim should be met is obviously a question of compromise. Fortunately the profits of the mines are such that moderate protection cannot seriously affect them. If the margin between returns and expenditure were a very narrow one, the question would assume an acute form ; but it is not here a case of survival of the fittest. The mines can well afford to pay a moderate ransom to the farmer. On the other hand, the prosperity of the whole country is so bound up with that of the Rand that agriculture, if it should ever have the power, will in its own interest refrain from imposing unfair burdens on the mines. This is obvious, indeed, from what has happened in the past. We have seen how the Government and Volksraad of the Republic, both consisting almost entirely of farmers, treated the Rand in all economic matters.

All these prospects of a prosperous future will, however, go for nought if dissension and strife should again arise within the country. Indeed, the question whether there will now be recon-

ciliation and concord between Briton and Boer is one which vitally affects not only the Transvaal, but all South Africa.

So far the signs are propitious. Since the war there has been no outbreak of racial bitterness—no attempt to wreak vengeance on one side or the other. The two races have settled down together with great forbearance and in apparent good-fellowship.

It is a happy augury, too, that during the recent Natal rebellion twice a thousand Boers offered to fight for and with the British.

The promise made in the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging is now being fulfilled, and self-government has been granted to the Republics on terms which, upon the whole, have met with general approval. Much breath and ink have been spent in calculations as to the exact number of seats which the Dutch and English are likely to obtain at the forthcoming elections in the Transvaal. It seems to be practically certain that neither the Mining Interests nor the old Burghers will find themselves in the majority, but that Pretoria and those voters on the Rand who are not directly identified with the mines will hold the scale between the two. And as we have seen, the probable cleavage will be on economic and not

on racial lines—that of Protection of agriculture and local industries, as against free importation of all necessaries of life, and the subordination of other interests to that of the mines. A *via media* will doubtless be found on this question here as it has been elsewhere in South Africa, and indeed in all countries which are not purely agricultural.

But if the Boers should now, or at any subsequent time, obtain the majority, and, in coalition with the English party which is in friendly touch with them, form the Government, none of the terrible consequences which have been foreshadowed in some quarters need be apprehended. The Boers are, and will remain, British subjects. "Cutting the painter" is a proceeding which is far less likely to emanate from them than it is from disaffected Britishers, by whom it has more than once been used as a threat. The Empire has a strong hold indeed on people who would look upon rebellion against its authority as a crime which would bring with it an immediate curse from on High. And in other ways also there is but little danger to the common interest by such a Government. The best friend of the Transvaal cannot desire for it a better or a wiser Government than that of the former Orange Free State, the "model Republic," which knew no racial

distinctions, and secured the loyalty of all who came within its boundaries, including many Englishmen, some of whom obtained high rank in its service, as well as the contented mining population of Jagersfontein.

If, on the other hand, Johannesburg should now—or, what is more likely, in the future—obtain control, it will no doubt, taught by the past, refrain from abusing its power. Nothing worse could happen to the Transvaal than that the Boer should refuse to identify himself with the State, that he should keep aloof from any share in its government, and that he should prefer exile to remaining in the land of his birth. That he has hitherto done so is no cause for much surprise. Nothing better could be expected when Lord Milner remained in office after the peace. Assuming even the justice of the feelings of admiration and gratitude which the friends of the late High Commissioner foster towards him, it was not possible for him to win either the regard or the confidence of the Boer, who look upon him as responsible for the last war, and therefore for all the misery it entailed. If Lord Milner had brought all the gifts of the earth to the old Burgher, he would have refused to accept them. Fortunately Lord Selborne appears to have gained

already that which was unattainable to his predecessor. The Dutch took to him from the first; the frank and sympathetic way in which he has met them, and the simple dignity of his character, seem to have produced a deep impression upon them. Some errors made by the late régime are now also happily being amended—such as the policy which was regarded by the Boer as an attempt to suppress his language, his cherished Taal. It was indeed heart-breaking to see how the most fateful of the blunders of the Republican Government was being repeated, without the reasons, or rather excuses, which the Boer had for his action. Nothing caused more discontent, or made Mr. Kruger more unpopular, than the refusal to grant equal rights to the English language. The President had, however, this to urge in answer, that if equal opportunities were given, the Taal was likely to be entirely supplanted by a language which has already conquered half the world, and which was the medium of commerce, of journalism, of literature, even in the old Transvaal; a language which was even then much more frequently used than Dutch in the larger communities such as Pretoria. But what the tongue of Shakespeare and Milton has to fear from a language which is not much

more than a patois, which has no acknowledged rules of grammar, and is not written even where it is spoken, which has no literature of any importance, passes the understanding of men. The Taal occupies very much the position which the Plattdeutsch of Fritz Reuter does[1] in the North of Germany. It is most expressive, and racy of the soil. It is appreciated—at times—by all who know it. When bi-lingual South Africans meet under foreign skies, it will be in the Taal that they will greet each other; they will revel in its accent; the taste of it will be sweet on their lips; but the chances are that half an hour later they will be chatting in English.[2]

How amenable the Boers are to kindness and

[1] Or did, half a century ago.

[2] The recent disputes as to the Dutch language came to an issue on the question as to whether it, or English, should be the medium of education in the schools where the young Boers are educated. When the wishes of the Dutch were disregarded, they founded their own self-supporting schools —an endeavour which shows the depth of the sentiment which animated them, since it was a severe tax on their strained resources. It is to be fervently hoped that Lord Selborne's attempt to come to terms with the Dutch leaders will be successful in the Transvaal, as it has already been in the Orange River Colony; for nothing could be more inimical to future unity and racial assimilation than that the Dutch and English children should be brought up, not as comrades, but in different schools.

sympathy has already been shown. The following account of the visit of the three Generals (Botha, De la Rey, and De Wet) to the King, shortly after peace was declared, is to the point. It was related to me by General de la Rey. He told me that His Majesty had received them most kindly. I pressed for details, and what follows will now be given in his words as I remember them. General de la Rey said that he and his friends were fetched from their quarters by Lords Roberts and Kitchener, who took them in a ship to that of the King. "Were you not nervous?" I asked. "Oh, not at all, but we wanted to know what we should have to do when we met His Majesty. So I asked Lord Kitchener about it. I told him that as he knew we had no kings in our country, and I had never shaken hands with one, but that we understood that there were certain rules called etiquette which prescribed what was the proper thing to do. His reply was that he himself did not quite know what had been arranged, and that the best thing we could do would be to keep our eyes on Lord Roberts and himself, and do what they did. So we came to the King's sLip, and walked up the ladder. Near the head of it stood the King, a smile on his face, and when he shook hands with us he said that he was glad to meet us, that we

had been brave enemies, and he hoped that we would now be good friends. We replied that we did hope that too, and that we were happy to see him recovered from his illness, that our people had heard of it with great regret, and were glad to know that the Lord had given him back his health. And after a chat His Majesty said he would take us to his wife; and the Queen was charming also (and how handsome she is, and a grandmother too!) and there were some of the children also—some girls. And presently I looked round for Lords Roberts and Kitchener, and there they stood, as straight as poles: it seemed to me that they were much less at ease than we were."

"And what are you going to tell our people about the King, Oom Koos?"

"I shall tell them this, that I think that if we had sooner known the King, and the King us, many things might have been different."

Indeed, reconciliation may be nearer than we have dared to anticipate.

And why should Briton and Boer not become friends? They have so much in common—their love of liberty, of sport, of adventure. It is strange how even through times most troubled, the individual Boer and Englishman drew together. They constantly intermarried; few

Boers so bitter but that they would give their daughter in marriage to an Englishman. Few farms could be found where some Britisher was not a welcome guest; no Englishman but he has a Dutch friend. When, for instance, we were straining every nerve to obtain amelioration of sentence, and then release, for the Reformers, it was found that there was not a single one of them who had not friends amongst the Boers, who would plead for him, work for him, till they saw him a free man again.

May the day soon dawn when the gulf between the two races is closed, for ever; when Boer and Briton stand together in firm and lasting friendship.

So mote it be!

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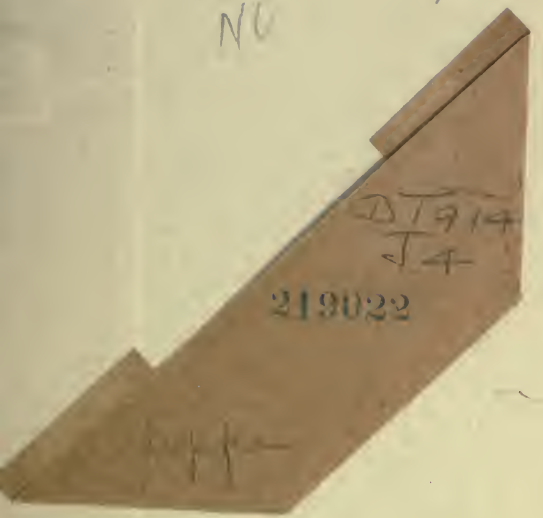
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